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HANDING OFF THE TORCH:
LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS AMONG THE BOOMER GENERATION IN EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

by

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Grand Forks, North Dakota

August
2014

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This dissertation, submitted by Barbara Arnold-Tengesdal in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under Whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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June 24, 2014

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Department: Teaching and Learning

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

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Barbara Arnold-Tengesdal

June 2014

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was never silent!

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine how the career paths of eight Baby Boomer Generation early childhood education (ECE) professionals evolved over time to support their leadership roles in research, pedagogy and policy development. Data was collected through a two-stage interviewing process and common themes were discovered through the analysis of the transcribed interviews. These themes revealed the participants' lived experiences during the historically significant period of the Civil Rights Movement, had a profound impact on the participants' philosophies, values and senses of a mission-driven purpose during their careers. The adaptive leadership model served as the conceptual framework for the study. Being mentored, developing peer networks and job experience gave the participants the expertise necessary to lead the field. Leadership attributes of persistence, risk-taking and passion, along with excellent communication skills, propelled the participants to positions of responsibility and influence as well as garnering opportunities for publishing and professional prominence. The participants enjoy working and few consider retiring, but will transition slowly to other meaningful work when new leaders step forward. The findings of this study suggest strong generational differences must be overcome in the workforce for the ECE field to stay relevant into the future and allow a transition of leadership to occur to the younger professionals in the field.

Keywords: mentoring, adaptive leadership, trait theory, generational differences, childcare, retirement, NAEYC, leadership, early childhood education

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

If the history of the American Early Childhood Education (ECE) profession were displayed on a timeline ranging from the works of early pioneers, such as Patty Smith Hill, to the present day, we would see the emergence of the Baby Boomer Generation, those born between 1946 to 1964, and, with it, a number of strong leaders who spent their lives and careers guiding the field through the past four decades of societal and cultural changes (NAEYC, 2009). The ECE profession was “led” by innovators and visionaries who, through research, public policy and practiced pedagogy, changed the way that young children were cared for and educated in America. Roger Neugebauer (June, 2012) notes that “in many ways, this generation of champions for children has shaped the early childhood field as we know it today.” As the Baby Boomer Generation prepares to retire, concerns have emerged regarding how the transitions of leadership within the field will take place (NAEYC Affiliate Council, 2009) and how the profession should be preparing the next generation of leaders (Sullivan, 2010).

Early childhood professionals are identified as people who care for or educate children from birth to the age of eight (NAEYC, 2008). A growing body of research has proven the importance of supporting these early years of child development. Placing higher expectations on those who work with young children, the profession faces multiple challenges as new federal investments flow to states that are developing pre-kindergarten programs and as teacher licensing becomes increasingly complex. Many ECE

professionals wonder who will take the lead in the field as the work becomes more complex and public accountability seeks to justify policy and practices. Rodd (2011) noted that:

as increasingly diverse services for young children and their families are required, and as more multi-disciplinary, inter-agency settings are established, the mantle of official leadership will be worn by increasingly diverse individuals - for example, head teachers, directors, managers, teachers, nursery officers, and play workers (pg. 43).

Identifying what leadership models might sustain the ECE field through the next several decades of change has become a key issue and growing concern regarding the “loss of a collective voice that might stymie the field” (Goffin & Washington, 2007, p. 10) while trying to keep the public eye on quality programs and practices for young children. Is the concept of individuals with specific leadership skills passé considering the growing movement to use collaborative and adaptive leadership models (Heifetz, 1994)? In the book *Ready or Not Leadership Choices in Early Care and Education* (2007), Goffin and Washington provide the ECE field with a framework for staying relevant well into the future years, using an adaptive leadership model. Goffin and Washington called on the ECE field to see leadership as a collective activity done by many for a common purpose, rather than a collection of attributes or characteristics held by individuals (p. 50). This point of view will serve as the conceptual framework for which this research study is based on.

Conceptual Framework

This study uses the adaptive leadership model as the conceptual framework by which the strengths identified within individuals leaders, collectively work together to move the Early Childhood profession forward. Goffin and Washington (2007) identified four decision-making archetypes that are needed for the adaptive work facing the ECE field in the future. They have labeled the four approaches to decision making as the guardians who are charged to protect historically valued positions, the accommodators who work to maintain equilibrium between a variety of positions on various issues, the entrepreneurs who pursue strategic new opportunities for the field, and the architects who focus on conditions that promote sustainable results (pg. 54). Together these archetypes provide a well- rounded collective voice by which leaders could respond to the adaptive challenges the field will face in the future.

According to Heifetz and Linsky (2002) adaptive leadership involves mobilizing people to respond to significant challenges when there do not seem to be specific solutions. A growing sense of urgency exists in regard to determining how the ECE field will support leadership development of young professionals and the need to react to the professional vacuum that will undoubtedly occur when faced with the retirement of those leaders and practitioners of the Baby Boomer Generation in the next few years. Bridging generational divides and preparing young professionals for careers and leadership roles in the highly diverse field of Early Childhood is important as public policy is rapidly changing the way that young children are educated and cared for in America. This study will use the framework of adaptive leadership as the lens to examine the career paths of eight exceptional ECE leaders who made historically significant contributions to the field

and to ascertain how leadership was developed and nurtured in each of them and what lessons can be learned by listening to their past experiences. Staying relevant and maintaining credibility are key issues as the ECE field continues to embrace its diverse perspectives and roles, and serves to develop, support and sustain new leaders who will move forward such policy as the *Strong Start for America's Children Act of 2013 H.R. 3461*, which is being introduced in the 2014 congressional session.

By reviewing historical documents and analyzing interview data from the participants, this study was completed within the framework of a qualitative phenomenological design approach. By sifting through the data to find the themes of influence on these renowned professionals, the study sought to examine how the career paths of these professionals evolved over time to support their leadership roles in research, practice and policy development, as well as to identify any lessons learned that can support contemporary professionals just beginning a career in an increasingly diverse profession.

As the field of Early Childhood is preparing the next generation of leaders, findings from the data analysis was contrasted with the adaptive leadership model identified by Goffin and Washington. A variety of programs have been developed throughout the nation aimed at sustaining the growth of the field, which is preparing professionals for participation in a field-wide leadership movement in early care and education (Goffin and Washington, 2007). The importance of supporting the newest professionals through their personal career journeys is a critical link to the future of the field if “it is to act with a coordinated voice on behalf of young children and their early care and education” (Goffin & Washington, 2007, pg. 8) and continue in the legacy of

exceptional practice set forth by the Baby Boomer Generation of leaders. Hearing the life stories of these leaders can serve as a framework for a discussion regarding how to stay relevant in the future and, ultimately, improve the learning outcome for young children in America.

History of the Problem

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) was founded in 1926 and is recognized as the largest early childhood professional association in the world (NAEYC, 2008). The influence of NAEYC working on the behalf of young children is done primarily through a strong inclusive membership joined together by a “desire to serve and act on behalf of the needs and rights of all young children” (NAEYC, 2008). The membership experienced tremendous growth in the 1990s and swelled to over 100,000 globally (NAEYC, 2009), while currently is at just over 68,000 (Simmons et al., 2014.). As the membership expanded so did the growing base of research informing pedagogy and public policy for young children and families (Blank, 2012). The landscape of early childhood education is changing in regards to knowledge, practice, and public policy surrounding young children and families.

The period between 1972 and 2012 saw a cultural shift beginning to take shape in America. On the heels of a declared war on poverty and the inception of the Head Start Act of 1965, as part of a presidential initiative, many people heeded a call to take a career path working with young children and families. With more women moving into the workforce, the growing need for childcare supported a wider array of jobs in a newly defined field of Early Care and Education. A traditional career of being a preschool or kindergarten teacher, which many of the early childhood professionals from the Baby

Boomer Generation were educated to do, was rapidly changing. Career opportunities were emerging outside of the traditional classroom or program director roles. New jobs in family support services, curriculum development, resource and referral agencies, and for-profit business ventures sprouted up, often paying higher wages than what traditional childcare teachers were making. In the wake of societal pressure calling for greater health and safety regulations as well as professional standards and research-based approaches for caring and educating young children, the field was required to “prove” itself so that it could continue to receive public and private investments. The Bush era of the late 1990s and early 2000s saw the beginning of a new accountability era, holding ECE professionals responsible for positive child learning outcomes often linked with high stakes testing and assessments.

A large number of young Baby Boomer Generation early childhood “teachers” were inspired to take on leadership roles in the field and began advocating for public policies and financing for a childcare system that supported families seeking quality out-of-home care. Many started new businesses and services to support the needs of the growing childcare industry, while others developed systems for educating and training a workforce capable of meeting the demands for childcare by a growing working family population. The long-standing traditional higher education system aimed at preparing professionals to work with young children was undergoing changes as well (Blank, 2010). The traditional classroom professoriate model of earning a degree and participating in research and becoming a preschool teacher, the model many Baby Boomers had participated in, was becoming obsolete as the ECE field was expanding

rapidly with childcare workers meeting minimal requirements to work with young children.

States began adopting new childcare regulations requiring a variety of training programs for the more specialized information that was needed by a new diverse workforce. Many professional associations, including NAEYC and Childcare Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agencies, responded to caregivers seeking specialized training and technical assistance with professional development training opportunities. Large scale conferences served as venues for sharing newly developed position statements based on the current research that would guide the policies and work within the field (NAEYC, 2008). Technical schools, vocational programs, community colleges, and four-year universities developed articulation agreements and career pathways that provided credentials and certificate programs for a growing number of untrained childcare workers. No longer did the traditional one-size-fit-all educational pathway of obtaining a higher education degree that many of the Baby Boomer Generation teachers had experienced, fit the needs for a rapidly expanding and diverse early childhood workforce. The need for full-day childcare, required by a growing number of women in the work force, was filled by providers willing to work for low wages and in programs that had few state regulations. Childcare licensing was beginning to emerge as important for maintaining the health and safety of children, but often with poorly organized learning environments. Without any federal guidelines, regulations of the childcare industry varied greatly from state to state. It was apparent in the ECE field that childcare reform was needed and guidance from the field regarding high quality practices was critical. In 1986, reforms were legislated in the *Act for Better Childcare*, which became a rallying point for

many professionals and ushered in an era of reform on many levels. From the early 1980s until now, the early care and education field saw a golden era, where the advancement of research, programs and policies was ushered in by a generation of innovators and visionaries who were well-respected worldwide (NAEYC, 2008 & 2009). It was in this period that the field of early care and education began to receive recognition; no longer a stepchild to traditional K-12 education, it became a significant player in educational debates.

As full-day kindergarten was expanding across the nation. Standards related to best practices was at the forefront of the debates focused on the monumental *No Child Left Behind* (2001) and *Good Start Grow Smart* (2001) federal initiatives that called for accountability and school readiness. The uproar of mid-career Baby Boomer early childhood professionals, who now were in management or leadership roles, was growing loud, but lacked a strong collective voice as newly adopted policies, classroom curriculum and teaching pedagogy sometimes ran counter-intuitive to their knowledge and beliefs about child development and what was good for young children.

The once united field was at a critical juncture and began to show signs of stress as Head Start, for-profit childcare, Pre-K, full-day kindergarten, higher education, and Childcare Resource and Referral systems were being pitted against each other for dwindling public funds. The Baby Boomer professionals, who were the architects of these systems and had longstanding friendships with one another, found themselves often outnumbered by non-educators and seated at tables labeled for statewide early childhood councils or consortiums. Many of these gatherings organized by state officials included politicians, business people and other “stakeholders” with no early childhood expertise.

Early childhood leaders now had to try to describe or defend the need for continuing a beloved program and scurry to find the data to prove its worth.

Liaisons with new community partners emerged. New “players” at the table, such as healthcare providers, police officers and economic development agencies and foundations heads, often required frequent and simplified vocabulary in order for them to understand a complex system of care and education. It was not uncommon for programs to have several funding sources all managed in a collection of silos with different purposes and reporting requirements. Combining federal, state, local and foundation grants was often necessary to sustain programs, yet all required accountability of how each specific fund was being used. Many CCR&R offices were managing a variety of service and training programs with multiple funding sources. The early childhood leaders, now mid-career Baby Boomers, who were often loyal to one program for their entire career, found themselves trying to explain the complexity of their work to a public crying out for school readiness and high-stakes testing to prove that children would graduate from high school if they had a preschool experience.

A federal requirement to develop early learning standards found states scrambling to create guidelines for child outcomes. Benchmarks, guidelines, standards, and outcomes were all names states used in their efforts to develop these learning expectations with few financial resources. State Departments of Education and teacher organizations such as NAEYC and the National Education Association saw these newly developed standards used with high stakes tests for measuring school accountability and student performance, as an “unfunded mandate” required by the federal government. States were adopting what another state had created in an effort to meet time restraints

with little or no resources. Collaboration was and remains, a critical component for grant writers seeking funds for research leading to data development and program improvement.

An identity crisis emerged as the American public tried to understand the differences among systems (Benjamin and Feinberg, 2008). The titles given to explain the systems were varied: early childhood education, early care and education, childcare, daycare, early child development, Head Start, Early Head Start, preschool, pre-kindergarten, infant-toddler, school-age, family care, licensed or registered care, and babysitters were confounding policymakers trying to fund various systems. Funding for programs became competitive among the traditional collaborative partners and a call for research grew in an effort to support a variety of technical reports needed to measure program outcomes and the school readiness of children.

The legacy of achievements throughout the past 42 years includes research, new programs and collaborative position statements on many critical topics to the field of Early Childhood. Neuroscience research on brain development, public policy supporting childcare programs, and position statements on applied pedagogy, such as “Developmentally Appropriate Practices” and the “Code of Ethical Conduct,” and new programs, such as the *NAEYC Accreditation System* and the *Child Development Associates* credential known as the *CDA*, changed how professional practices were defined (NAEYC, 2009). The current body of research that informs our teaching pedagogy and practices with children also laid a foundation for growing public investments in programs for families with young children. The Baby Boomer Generation of ECE professionals provided a legacy of leadership that deserves to be studied.

Learning from their personal career stories and the inspired passion that has influenced the profession so profoundly and significantly could hold answers regarding how to formulate career pathways and educational models for younger ECE professionals entering the field.

Current State of the Problem

Concern with regard to who will take the lead once these aging researchers and professionals retire is a frequent question at membership gatherings of many professional organizations, specifically the NAEYC. In addition, NAEYC membership numbers have declined in the past few years (Simmons, White, Sheehan, & McCain, 2014) creating concern. Leaders emphatically seek guidance from the NAEYC on how to replace the dwindling number of members willing to take on leadership roles in local affiliates. States are preparing workforce initiative models to guide new professionals in their career pathways. Most state plans include components of leadership in hope of raising the quality of care and education available to families with young children and, thereby, raising the level of professionalism of teachers and caregivers (Young, 2012). Yet, is it realistic to believe that these newly designed systems of professional development (LeMoine, 2008), including career ladders, registries, and specialized credentials, can truly develop a workforce of leaders and professionals capable of continuing the legacy of the exceptional work created by Baby Boomers in the past four decades?

As younger teachers and caregivers are entering the ECE field, generational wars are taking place in the workplace. New professionals with savvy technological skills, a vision of staff collaboration via social media and growing up in an era of the *No Child Left Behind* assessment frenzy, find themselves in conflict with the experiences and

workplace expectations of their Baby Boomer Generation colleagues. The older and experienced Baby Boomer Generation professionals often have a different set of workplace expectations (Berl, 2006), such as face-to-face collaboration, and often question purchased curriculums loaded with easy assessment instruments, and the use of technology in the learning environments of very young children.

The work of Goffin and Washington (2007) raised awareness in the ECE field by “calling for the question” with regards to what needs to change in field-wide leadership and how the profession must navigate the period of transition that it is facing in the next decade. Washington (2008) persistently pushes the field to reflect upon the future and, looking at the relevance of what higher education is doing to prepare the early childhood workforce and mentor new leaders. Higher education institutions are facing their own issues as they seek to find a balance between keeping costs under control, making classes accessible, and facing a number of retiring senior faculty members who are less likely to retire in a down economic environment.

In the last 12 years, assessment and accountability has become the driving force in many school reform initiatives. The use of skill-based pedagogy has transformed the ECE field. A multitude of quantifiable standards have emerged to assess everything from teacher quality to child outcomes. The NAEYC developed the “Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation” (NAEYC, 2009) to guide teacher preparation programs. The *No Child Left Behind* (2002) law required states to develop standards to show that their teachers were highly qualified to work in classrooms. In addition, the newly established Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) in 2013, revised standards used in accrediting higher education teacher training programs. Child

outcomes were developed and in an effort to assist states, the *Common Core Standards* were developed to provide unity and consistency across the nation measuring student grade level progress (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

Baby Boomer Generation ECE leaders insisted that assessment must be tied to accountability in meeting program goals. High-stakes testing has flourished recently. This propensity for measuring achievement is more acceptable to the newer generation ECE professionals who have grown up in the culture of testing, while Baby Boomers tend to question the authenticity of such results-driven curricula.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the career paths of eight exemplary Baby Boomer Generation ECE professionals who have made significant contributions to the field throughout the past 42 years (1972-2014) in areas of research, practice, and policy development. The study examined the participants' early career development in order to ascertain how their leadership attributes were developed over time and whether any commonalities among their lives exist that can then be applied to the contemporary ECE field.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research question:

How did the career paths of the Baby Boomer Generation of early childhood professionals evolve over time to support their leadership roles in research, practice, and policy development?

This overarching research question subsequently leads to two-sub questions:

1. As contemporary ECE leaders emerge, how will the Baby Boomer Generation of ECE leaders confidently transition out of the field?
2. How will the Baby Boomer Generation of ECE leaders transfer their knowledge and leadership to the younger generation in order to bridge the generational divide and maintain the legacy of lessons learned over the past 42 years of professional work in the field?

This study provided an opportunity for self-reflection on the professional contributions of the participants to the general knowledge base of the ECE field, to understand their ideas about the growing leadership potential of the younger generation and how transitions of leadership can take place as Boomers retire.

Rationale

Using a qualitative research design, the career paths of eight exemplary ECE leaders, who are classified as members of the Baby Boomer Generation or on the cusp, as defined by Lancaster and Stillman (2002), were examined using a purposeful sampling approach. Using a two-stage interview model, the study explored the experiences and historical events that influenced their contributions to the field during the past 42 years (1972-2014) and propelled them to a level of exceptional leadership in the following areas:

- **Research:** Changing the field through scientific study that informs practice and policy.
- **Practice:** Supporting the advancement of pedagogical and technical skills while working within the field to either manage or teach children and adults using best practice, including supervision, administration, curriculum development, assessment, reflection and practice.

- **Advocacy and Policy Development:** Advancing the field or society through policy and advocacy that informs our societal or global thoughts and practices as to what is best for children and families.

Significance of the Study

Like many caregiving professions, such as those in nursing and social work, the early childhood field is faced with a large number of professionals who will retire from practice within the next decade (Porter, 2012). The underlying murmur heard throughout gatherings of professionals at local meetings and national conferences centers upon who will step up to take over the leadership roles in the organization when the “old guard” retires. Throughout the ranks of the Boomer professionals there exists a concern that the younger generation is ill-prepared to or uninterested in taking on leadership roles. Many near retirement age understand that the field will look different, but wonder if the younger generation has the skill set and passion to carry forth the legacy set before them when they are ready to hand off the leadership torch.

The early childhood field is changing as the economic impact of the work of caring for young children expands. The growing number of states creating pre-kindergarten programs as a transition to more rigorous kindergarten classrooms is rapidly changing the way that professionals are educated. Savvy consumers of childcare are utilizing newly developed ECE quality rating systems to choose a childcare options right for their families. Often, younger professionals with degrees are working side-by-side with Boomers who have less formal education, but perform daily tasks from a knowledge-base weighted heavily on experience. By examining the career paths taken by Baby Boomer Generation ECE leaders and comparing them to

the typical paths experienced by young professionals, this study sought to identify critical gaps in early childhood career development that might become a barrier for young professionals interested in taking on leadership roles.

Delimitations of the Study

This phenomenological research study included eight participants. Two interviews were conducted with each participant with time between each interview for reflection.

This study assumes that:

- the Baby Boomer Generation represents persons born between 1946 and 1964;
- those born on the cusp between 1940 and 1946 who personally identify as a member of the Baby Boomer Generation can be included in the study;
- the ECE field describes the workforce of people who provide services to children from birth to the age of eight and their families;
- generalizations about the Baby Boomer Generation do not take into account culturally, socially, geographic and gender issues that affect the personal experiences of the subjects; and
- the national recognition of the participants' professional contributions will, most likely, make it impossible to maintain anonymity.

Researcher Bias

The researcher, as a member of the Baby Boomer Generation, was mindful of remaining objective during the study and worked diligently to temper her passion for supporting the leadership development of new professionals as they begin their own

careers. Careful consideration toward bias must be constantly checked as working to prepare entry level teachers is the profession of the researcher. To sustain objectivity, the interviews were transcribed verbatim and a second coder not of the ECE profession was used to review the transcripts.

Parameters

The parameters of this study are restricted to:

- participants who are of the Baby Boomer Generation, or on the cusp of the generation, and still actively working within the ECE field; and
- a two-phase literature review process, with the first phase looking at general information about the Baby Boomer Generation and definitions of leadership, while the second phase reviewed the literature that supported the themes that emerge from the study, including career pathways, mentoring, and how to support generational differences in the workforce.

Vocabulary and Acronyms of the Study

Adaptive Leadership: A model for mobilizing people to address significant challenges and the individual roles, belief systems and behaviors that affect the dynamics of a system. Adaptive leadership involves the ability to understand a situation and its complexity from a broad perspective. It recognizes multiple perspectives and approaches to tackling a challenge (Haber-Curran & Tillapaugh, 2013) .

Baby Boomer Generation: People born between the years 1946 and 1964. Generally, this generation is referred to as “Boomers” because of the large number (a boom) of babies born during this era (Landcaster & Stillman, 2002).

Baby Boomer Generation “Cuspers”: People born in a year caught between two generations, such as the Traditionalists and Baby Boomers (Landcaster & Stillman, 2002), in this case, those born between 1940 and 1946.

Early Childhood Education (ECE): Sometimes referred to as Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), childcare or child development. For the sake of this study, the term ECE universally represents the entire field of those individuals working with and studying children from birth to the age of eight. It is the belief of the researcher that all children’s experiences are powerful learning opportunities in which education takes place. Thus, an ECE professional is anyone who works in some capacity to support the care and education of young children from birth to the age of eight.

Generation X: People born between the years 1965 and 1980. This group is referred to as Gen Xer’s and is the first generation to see television and media exposure having a dramatic effect on their perceptions of the world. The term “latch key kids” was given to this generation who saw the boom of two parent working households (Landcaster & Stillman, 2002).

Leadership: Often over-generalized to mean just about anything, the term for the purpose of this study will build on Northouse’s (2007) view that leadership is using one’s power and influence to help others achieve a common goal. Discussed in Chapter Two are the definitions of leader, leadership and leading in relationship to the ECE field.

Millennial: People born between the years 1981 and 2000. This group is sometimes called Generation Y. They came of age in the shadow of 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York, and have been raised feeling protected and under constant focus of attentive Boomer generation parents (Reeves, 2008).

NAEYC: The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) was founded in 1926 and is dedicated to issues affecting the development and education of young children. Historically, the association was focused on policy and child development practice in the United States, but it has become the premiere organization around the world for research and professional development (Le Moine, 2008). The NAEYC is recognized as a global leader in the ECE field.

Professional Development: Persons participating in a workforce, usually to improve the quality of their work or attain a higher degree of expertise, universally use this term to represent the attainment of additional training and education. The term “professional development” is often linked with other terms, such as “systems,” “plans” and “pathways.” It can also include formal and informal coaching or mentoring systems (NAEYC & National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, 2011).

Silent Generation: People born between the years 1925 and 1945. This generation is also known as the Greatest Generation or the Traditionalists. They were raised during the Great Depression and World War II (Hansen & Leuty, 2012).

Trait Theory: Defined as patterns of personal characteristics that support effective leadership across a variety of organizational situations (Zaccarro, 2007). Trait approaches to leadership studies are rooted in the idea that certain people are born with traits that make them great leaders (Northouse, 2007).

Organization of Study

This introductory chapter provided an overview of the study and also presented the history and description of the problem as well as the purpose, approach, and

significance of the research. The delimitations and vocabulary that will be used throughout the study have been defined.

Chapter Two provides an initial literature review and sets the groundwork for the narrative interview questions asked of the participants. This initial literature review will provide a framework for understanding the commonalities of the Baby Boomer Generation as well as the definitions of leadership and implications in the ECE field. Chapter Three explains the research design used to conduct this qualitative phenomenological study as well as the questions developed. Chapter Four presents the findings of the research, including the themes supported by a supplemental literature review. Chapter Five presents a discussion of the findings and conclusions on how to support the career development of new professionals with an emphasis on research, pedagogy and policy work.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Baby Boomer Generation

Rock and Roll, the Civil Rights Movement, hippies, disco, Title IX gender equity, miniskirts, the Vietnam War, Apollo 11, polyester, Watergate, the Cold War, Twinkies™ and Tang™. Ask anyone born of the Baby Boomer Generation what these terms represent and they will tell you that they represent change, progress and challenging the status quo. The people of this generation “experienced the deaths of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. and the Vietnam War and Watergate scandal--events that shaped their lives and molded them into a generation that stands up for what it believes” (Carlson, 2004). The Boomers emerge in the literature as a generation that grew up during a period where major changes took place in space, technology and the global community. The Berlin Wall rose and fell during their adulthood, a symbolic boundary between democracy and communism during the Cold War (Rosenberg, 2012). Long standing barriers to equality for race, gender and education fell as well. Boomers were often the first in their families to attend college. With the feminist movement underway, many women left the traditional role of staying home and raising children for college degrees and a career to answer the yearning for a “more fulfilling life” (History.com, 2013). The Baby Boomer Generation is the largest sub-group of the population, with 76 million Boomers born between 1946 and 1964. Today, the oldest Boomers are in their

late 60s. Many are considering retirement and, yet, still feel compelled to work. By 2030, roughly one in five Americans will be older than 65 (History.com, 2013).

This study looks at the critical intersection of the study participants' generational identities and their career pathways as they focused on leadership and contributions to the ECE field. Sanden (2008) defines a generation as

as a cohort of people born within a particular period of time. By most definitions, each generational interval is approximately 20 years in length. Twenty years represents the average length of time between birth and childbearing—or the beginning of the next generation. The 20 interval year also represents the division of an average human lifespan of roughly 80 years into four distinct phases: youth, rising adulthood, midlife, and elderhood (p.12).

Generations move from one life phase to another together as a cohesive group, developing a “peer personality” (Strause & Howe, 2008, p. 63) of generalized traits and attributes that define those raised in the same period of time. At the end of each generation is a group that Lancaster and Stillman (2002) called the “Cuspers,” which includes the four to six years before or after a generation. Howe and Strauss (2000) noted that three attributes have influence over which peer personality a cusper might take on. Self-perception of membership, common beliefs or core values, and the historical period in which their life events occurred can influence the generational group identify of an individual. For the purpose of this study, the following generational categories will be used for identification: the Baby Boomer Generation, born 1946-1964; Generation X or Thirteenth Generation, born 1964-1982; and Millennial Generation or Generation Y, born 1982-2003 (Sanden, 2008). It is common for these three generations to be employed in

the same environment, working side-by-side, leading, sometimes, to conflict in the workplace.

Generational Differences in the Workplace

Conflict in the workplace is nothing new. Views regarding work ethics, flexible schedules and professional development are just a few of the issues that can take on a generational flavor. Boomers, known for their strong work ethic and allegiance to what they believe in, often fight hard for causes or issues perceived as important, such as Head Start or Social Security. Frustration arises when they do not believe that others share their perspectives. Examples of workplace discussion topics among Boomers are: Who will run the schools? Who will plan the science fairs? Who will keep the local professional conference going year after year? Renn in his article *Debunking Generational Differences* (2008) shared this story about a school district facing what he calls the perfect storm.

The district was facing an unprecedented loss of leaders over a very short period of time; 63 of the district's 100 principals were eligible to retire within the next five years. In addition, there was growing discomfort among the Baby Boomer principals who, at the end of their careers, were struggling to replace Boomer teachers with recent university graduates. Principals often described these new generation teacher applicants (Gen-Xers) as having 'bad attitudes,' as 'lacking commitment' and as being 'poorly motivated for teaching.' The principals were clearly resisting employing these individuals and were searching far and wide for more experienced candidates....the perfect storm was about [the] generational differences between Boomer principals and new generation teachers.

This story is similar to many heard anecdotally and, yet, a few studies have shown that no significant generation difference exists in regard to work commitment (Wallace, 2006; Renn, 2008). However, there is a difference in the preferences of leadership behaviors between generations (Rodriguez, Green & Ree. 2003). In several studies, Gen- Xers have preferred challenging tasks accomplished within a workday, surfing and purchasing via the Internet, working alone with flexible hours, and having a challenging, fun work environment without the need for job security. Boomers, on the other hand, liked challenging tasks accomplished within several days, utilizing the telephone for comparing prices, working alone with regularly scheduled hours, and having a retirement plan that provides healthcare options, pensions and other financial benefits (Rodriguez, Green, & Ree, 2003). This study explored the participants' views about generational differences and whether these differences were seen as barriers to encouraging new leadership development in the ECE field and/or the timing of the retirement of the Boomers.

Leadership

To the younger generation, leadership is a one-time occurrence that they can complete and then move on. To the Baby Boomer Generation, leadership is a process, something that you grow into. Just as the term 'Coke' has come to refer to any cola drink, the term 'leadership' has become a watered down term for participating in any activity that is not self-focused. Common language among new professionals is 'servant leadership' or 'teacher leader,' terms usually included in the conceptual frameworks of higher education institutions. New professionals are encouraged to join student organizations to grow their leadership skills and build a resume with service experiences

and, once hired, can take a workshop or series of credit-based classes and get a leadership credential or certificate, such as the one available through the Wisconsin childcare provider Registry. Do these labels truly describe a leader in the ECE field? If one become a childcare center director, does this person automatically become a leader by default because of the job and influence upon the staff members? Identifying the differences between ‘management’ and ‘leadership’ was important when considering how participants in this study brandished power and recognition within the ECE field as a leader and not just as an outstanding manager.

Confusion between the definitions of leadership and management abound. Many definitions of leadership exist, but, for the purpose of this study, using one’s power and influence to help others achieve a common goal (Chicquette, 2010) will be the accepted definition of leadership and built on the work of Robert Northouse. Northouse (2007), in his definition as described in Chapter I, says “leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3). The words “process,” “influence” and “common goal” are all words that give action a purpose. The individual is the leader who undertakes the work that influences others’ thoughts and actions. The work or actions of the study participants’ has influenced the ECE field. Through research, pedagogy and policy development, each of the study participants’ actions in the ECE field has had great influence on the direction of the field and, in some cases, the nation. This study explores the roles that each participant took on throughout his/her career path. Many of these roles included jobs managing programs, directing projects and leading change through system building policy efforts. At the 2012 NAEYC Professional Development Institute, Reardon said that “we recognize leaders

before we define it and leaders develop leaders.” This statement identifies the adaptive challenges of recognizing and developing new leaders and requires the ECE field to ask of itself: How then will the ECE field move through generational differences that might create barriers to support new professionals taking on roles that lead to exemplary work? How will the field stop the progression of underprepared teachers entering the field (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2013)? How is the next generation of ECE leaders being prepared to move the legacy of the past forward? As the Baby Boomer Generation of ECE leaders retire, will they gracefully step aside for a different style of leadership in a new era? All these questions are the concerns of a professional field seeing unprecedented change about to take place as public investments in young children are growing and fewer people are entering the ECE workforce.

Mentoring

A powerful tool for the ECE field could be the large number of Baby Boomer professionals available as mentors. Mentoring is different than coaching. Mentoring is a relationship that is focused on a person and supports the career, individual growth and maturity of a mentee (Starcevich, 2009). Starcevich also notes that mentoring is typically self-determined, and focused on affirming the gifts and strengths of one’s mentee. Mentoring has been used for centuries to develop students (Cohen, 1995) and is frequently used in workplace and academic environments (Merriweather & Morgan, 2013). A mentor could be a teacher, colleague or guardian and provide a source of strength to a mentee (Sullivan, 2009). This study saw mentoring as a critical component to the participants early career development. Mentors often saw leadership attributes in mentees and supported the growth of these traits. The idea that leaders are born with

particular traits is discussed later in this chapter under the heading of Trait Theory. A difference between coaching and mentoring is seen in the lifetime investment that is often made by a mentor to support and affirm a mentee through many situations throughout a career.

Coaching is performance based and often focused on attaining specific knowledge or skills, and strategically assesses or monitors progress (Starcevich, 2009). According to Sullivan, mentors might provide coaching or training, but focuses more on a relationship with the mentee built on trust (2009). A coach might eventually turn into a mentor, but not necessarily. Coaching has been used as a key component in many early childhood training and technical assistance programs (Isner et al., 2011). Many professional development opportunities might use coaching as an activity in orienting a new staff person towards a role, or work with others to develop a particular skill such as reading, sports or another short term assignment. Coaching is defined within the ECE field as,

a relationship-based process led by an expert with specialized...knowledge and skills...designed to build the capacity for specific professional dispositions, skills, and behaviors, and is focused on goal-setting and achievement for an individual or group (National Association for the Education of Young Children & National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, 2011, p.2)

Typical techniques used in coaching early childhood professionals have been on-site assistance, modeling, and topical discussion with open-ended questions regarding quality practices, routines or curriculum development (National Association for the Education of Young Children & National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, 2011). Coaching activities utilized in the early childhood professional development and

technical assistance systems were measured in visits (Smith, Robbins, Schneider, Kreader, & Ong, 2012) and often took place in work settings.

Many of the study participants had long-term mentoring relationships with more than one person and held in high esteem, fondly remembering their mentors. Participants used the relationship for advice, and throughout the years provided mutual support to their mentors. One study looked at the significant role that generational differences played in the mentoring relationship. Merriweather and Morgan (2013) found that while “mentoring, especially among non-traditional intergenerational pairs, is not always smooth and easy but the journey you travel together has benefits beyond what you could ever imagine.” Moving through the nuances of intergenerational personalities could prove a valuable relationship tool if Baby Boomer generation ECE professionals take on the responsibilities of mentoring a younger generation of leaders.

Trait Theory

Does the situation make a great leader, or does the leader naturally respond to the situation? As stated earlier, leadership theories abound. Of special interest to this study is the idea of Trait-based leadership. Leaders when anecdotally asked will often say, “I never thought I’d be in this position” or “I never dreamed I would be leading this organization”. Often taken by surprise, many leaders show a willingness to step in when a need is evident, or demonstrate an intuitive knowing about a problem and persistence to follow through. Goff (2003) describes the trait theory as the individual asserting leadership traits as part of his or her personality and those traits can be polished in order to be successful. This would describe how participants often took on leadership roles at a young age and how mentors often “saw something in them” that opened doors of

leadership opportunities. Goff (2003) goes on to say that trait theory is different than behavioral leadership theory which attempts to understand styles used by leaders required by their work. Whether leadership is a behavior, skill or trait, according to Germain (2012) “it all begins with identifying qualities of great persons”. Zaccaro et al. (2004) notes that trait theory has had an “ebb and flow” throughout history starting in the late 1800’s when extraordinary characteristics and transformational influences of certain individuals were explored (Galton, 1869).

Study participants are recognized by the field as some of the most prominent and influential people in the ECE field. Publishing, developing businesses and creating research theories about many ideas that have laid the groundwork for the ECE field are not activities taken on by the faint of heart. Nor is it a coincidence of being in the right place at the right time. They possessed personality traits that propelled them into leadership roles at young ages. Research bears out a body of data that points to the personality traits play an important role in leadership development.

The trait approach focuses exclusively on the leader, not on the followers or the situation. This makes the trait approach theoretically more straightforward than other approaches...In essence, the trait approach is concerned with what traits exhibit and who has those traits. It does not lay out a set of hypotheses or principles about what kind of leader is needed in a certain situation or what a leader should do given a particular set of circumstances...this approach emphasizes the leaders and her or his personality that are central to the leadership process. (Germain, 2012, p. 33)

More in line with adaptive leadership conceptual framework, an integrated model of leader traits and behaviors are of interest. In an integrated trait-behavioral model of leadership effectiveness, the trait of conscientiousness was found to be the most consistent predictor of leadership success (Derue et al., 2011). Participants were often described in the data as persistent, a risk-taker and able to articulate a situation when others often floundered.

Adaptive Change in the Field of Early Childhood Education

As indicated in Chapter I, the ECE field grew rapidly during the past 42 years. Early childhood programs expanded, while child care licensing and regulation lagged behind. Visionary ECE leaders began sounding alarms in an effort to raise awareness of the growing problems facing the field. In the book *Reinventing Early Care and Education a Vision for a Quality System* (Kagan & Cohen, 1996), a bold call to action was made in regard to the crucial need to raise the quality of care, learn from history and build financing for the infrastructure of the ECE field. Eighteen years later, the same problems still exist. In the book *America's Child Care Problem the Way Out* (Helburn & Bergmann, 2003), the authors state that child care needs fixing and that the ECE field must wrestle with how to provide affordable care for families. Eleven years later, the ECE field still struggles with problems of how to compensate caregivers without relying solely on parent fees. In 2008, Washington asked:

Who will give visibility to and champion this cause of ensuring highly qualified staff for all young children? Who will facilitate shared leadership, new collaborative relationships, programs and paradigms? How can this leadership be

mobilized? Who is in position to facilitate dialog, negotiate conflict and encourage collaborations (p. 25)?

Six years later, these questions are being ignored by the ECE field. Recently, Shonkoff (2010) developed a biodevelopmental framework to be used to understand how early childhood policy should evolve to support what scientific research is proving important for a young child's optimal development. Shonkoff (2010) noted that the fragmented system of child care programs and services is flawed. Often a family must work with several agencies to support the individual needs of a specific child.

The need [of the ECE field is] to overcome the persistent fragmentation that typifies health, education, and human services systems by leveraging an integrated, science-based framework rather than negotiating interagency agreements among conceptually disconnected programs (p. 363).

Numerous technical reports and books have identified the need for system-wide changes in the ECE field in order to raise the quality of childcare and meet the challenges of the school readiness initiatives developed by the administrations of Presidents Bush and Obama. However, the leadership necessary to make these adaptive changes has not materialized. The framework for an adaptive leadership model that would guide the ECE field through these system-wide changes is broadly described by Goffin and Washington (Goffin & Washington, 2007; Washington, 2008; Goffin, 2013), yet few opportunities have materialized to move the ECE field forward with visionary leadership. In the book *Ready or Not Leadership Choice in Early Care and Education* (Goffin & Washington, 2007), four archetypes for decision-making in early care and education have been

identified. It might serve the ECE field well to explore the ideas of adding intergenerational groups of leaders to fill these archetype roles.

Generational Identity

Maneuvering through generational differences in the workplace can be tricky. Early childhood programs could possibly have three generations working side-by-side in one childcare program. According to the National Survey for the Early Care and Education (Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, 2013), 50% of the medium range of ECE workers have an average of 14 years of experience. Thus, this information shows that Gen Xers and Millennials are working side-by-side with the Baby Boomer Generation. Howe and Strauss (2000) identified three attributes that differentiate generations: a generational identity that begins in adolescence, has common attitudes and beliefs, and allows the individuals to grow up together in a period of history identified by trends and significant events. These three attributes are discussed below in regard to the generational identities of Baby Boomers, Gen Xers and Millennials.

The Baby Boomer Generation is confident and was indulged as children. Due to its large cohort size, it has political clout. Boomers grew up in a time of great prosperity and have been optimistic and responsible for many social movements in America. They value their careers and seek a purpose-driven life with meaning (Hansen & Leuty, 2012). Women of the Baby Boomer Generation have had fewer options for careers than those generations that followed. Common historical experiences for this generation include the Civil Rights Movement, Title IX equality in education, and the Vietnam War.

Gen Xers grew up with more media influence, typically had both parents working outside of the home and, thus, were identified as latchkey kids, with school-age childcare

programs developed to meet the growing demand for supervision in the afterschool hours of the day (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). They switch jobs often, looking for satisfaction, and have been shown to have less trust in authority (Debard, 2004) than the generations before them. Gen Xers have less interest in staying in one job for a long time and make more career moves than the Boomer generation. This generation is seen as more cynical because of the negative events in history such as the AIDS virus, high divorce rate, and the Persian Gulf War (Hansen & Leuty, 2012).

The Millennial Generation is often called the Me Generation or Generation Y and known for constantly taking selfies with camera phones and posting them online. Identified as narcissistic and entitled, the Millennials have high expectations for careers that will tap into their talents. This generation have high aspirations to achieve greatness and been told that they can do anything because they are loved and special (Stein, 2013). Millennial's believe that the world is unlimited and as is the number of friends they keep in their contact lists. A growing interest in video gaming as a past-time, and multi-tasking on phones and computers is socially acceptable. A constant source of fear about physical safety is present because of the growing influence of global terrorism and school violence.

It is not hard to see that generational identity could easily play havoc in a work environment, especially one where caregiving practices differs based on the worker's generational identity. Understanding the blend of generations in the early childhood profession might be what is needed to create the right mixture of intergenerational leaders to move the ECE field through the adaptive changes necessary to stay relevant in the future.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

A growing sense of urgency exists on the part of the ECE field in regard to how it will fill the leadership void expected when the Baby Boomer Generation of practitioners near retirement age. There are stories to be told about the lived experiences of this generation and questions to be asked about how they became so passionate about their work and contributions to the profession's base of knowledge and policy. The purpose of this study was to examine the career paths of eight exemplary Baby Boomer Generation ECE professionals who have made significant contributions to the field throughout the past 42 years (1972-2014) in the areas of research, practice, and policy development. The researcher interviewed the participants about their early career development in order to ascertain how their leadership attributes developed over time and what significant experiences motivated them take their career paths. The data from the interviews provided testimony to the common themes and ideas that emerged that can be applied to the contemporary ECE field. A phenomenological approach was the methodology employed in order to answer the following research question and sub-questions:

1. How did the career paths of the Baby Boomer Generation of early childhood professionals evolve over time to support their leadership roles in research, practice and policy development?

- a. As contemporary ECE leaders emerge in the field, how will the Baby Boomer Generation of ECE leaders confidently transition out of the field?
- b. How will the Baby Boomer Generation of ECE leaders transfer their knowledge and leadership to these new leaders in order to bridge the generational divide and maintain the legacy of the lessons learned over the past 42 years of professional work in the field?

This chapter will be used to describe the phenomenological qualitative methodology used in the study as well as the sampling procedures, participant selection process, method of data collection and data analysis process used.

Design

Qualitative research, takes a naturalistic form of inquiry (Creswell, 2005) and focuses on the setting and context of an experience as well as the participants' perspectives as critical elements in the research. Qualitative researchers focus on describing or understanding relationships (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). In qualitative work, themes emerge that help formulate hypotheses after a minimal literature review. The data gathered is often from a variety of sources, such as observations, interviews, document reviews and journal analyses.

In the case of this study, the interviews were the technique used to gather the data. The data was transcribed, went through an open-coding process and categorized in order to discover the themes and common experiences lived by the Baby Boomer Generation. After the data was collected and analyzed, a second, more in-depth, literature review was used to explore the categories, themes and assertions that were developed from data and

was added to chapter II. After this review, the researcher compiled a report of the findings. Figure 1 provides a graphic representation of the studies' components and phases.

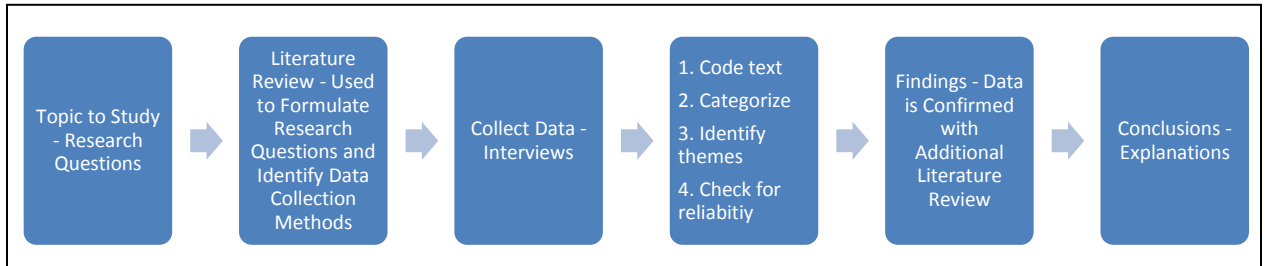


Figure 1. Physical map detailing the phenomenological approach to a research question.

The semi-structured interview process and several key variables in the selection of the participants determined the choice of using a phenomenological research design for the study. Using a phenomenological methodology allows the researcher to seek to understand the essence of the experiences studied (Creswell, 1998). As the study examined the historical experiences of the participants in a narrative format using multiple interviews, the phenomenological approach was best suited for this study.

A two interview series was used for data collection. This model of in-depth, phenomenological interviews allowed the participants and researcher to share the meaning of the participants' experiences within a context of lived experiences (Seidman, 2006; Patton, 1989). According to Dolbeare and Schuman (1982), the first interview should focus on the life history of the participant, giving context to the experiences that he shares. The second interview should allow for more details of the participant's present life and ask the participants to make an emotional or intellectual connection between his work and life experiences (Seidman, 2006). The research questions designed for this study followed the same organizational structure. The first set of questions asked for a

narrative description of each participant's life stories, including events, people and issues that influenced his early career path, and asked whether he sees himself transitioning out of the ECE field in the near future. The second interview asked each participant to put his experiences into a contemporary context, comparing his personal growth into leadership roles within the ECE field to what he sees happening today. The questions also asked for the participant to provide perceptions and insights from his personal experiences that could guide the ECE field into the future.

The interview technique allowed perceptions of the participants to become the data, not the preconceived ideas of the researcher. Within the ECE field, there are many programs, credentials and organizational structures dedicated to developing leadership attributes in people. This study examined whether these types of "leadership development" programs were available to the participants in their early careers and how their experiences compared with the collective action suggested by the adaptive leadership model used as the conceptual framework for the study. The in-depth interviews ascertained whether any unique experiences or events propelled the participants into the level of professionalism that they have achieved in their long and illustrious careers. The data collected regarding the intersection of lived experiences and career decisions was aimed at providing an understanding into how to address critical issues facing the professional ECE field, specifically the high annual turnover rate and the personal characteristics indicative of a field perceived as a calling with emotional rewards (Porter, 2012).

Selection of the Participants

Each participant has a history of visionary leadership in the ECE field, is classified as a member of the Baby Boomer Generation's peer group (born between 1946-1964) or is on the cusp (those born between 1940-1946 who are not typically identified as either part of the Silent or Baby Boomer Generation) and still actively works in the field. The participants have written, developed and/or played a critical role in defining the work of the early childhood profession. According to Creswell (1998) "individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being explored and can articulate their conscious experiences" are important participants. In the case of this study, each participant is nationally known in the ECE field for his work in research, for guiding the practices and pedagogy of professionals toward excellence and high standards, and has been instrumental in moving public policies in dramatic ways. Each participant signed the informed consent document prior to the data collection that clearly defines the risks and benefits of participation in the research study. Due to the national prominence and recognition given to the body of work developed throughout the career of the participants, it might be hard to maintain anonymity with subsequent published articles. Although the researcher took steps to ensure the confidentiality of any information chosen for exclusion by the participant, it was made clear to the participants through the signed informed consent document and mentioned at the beginning of the interview that anonymity would not be possible. The researcher also informed the participants that they may review the recordings and abstain from answering any questions. The informed consent document is attached as Appendix A.

Sampling Procedures

Using a purposeful sampling approach (Patton, 2002; Glesne, 2006) can lead to information rich data collection. In this case, the variables of being a member of the Baby Boomer Generation and being renowned in the ECE field for research, pedagogy and/or policy development set the stage for seeking data specifically purposed for understanding how each individual developed his attributes of leadership. The data was examined through the lens of the adaptive leadership model described by Goffin and Washington (2007) and seen as taking place historically in the collective experiences of the participants' early career paths. The selection strategy for the study was a homogeneous sampling (Glesne, 2006) where all of the participants had similar career paths leading to the highest level of professional recognition for contributions and visionary leadership in the ECE field. These participants transcended the generalized work of other professionals in the field and continue to actively work in the field. Eight participants were chosen for this study. The participants were not randomly selected, but chosen specifically for their professional body of work and its significance to the generalized ECE field.

Method of Data Collection

A semi-structured, one-on-one interview format was used to collect the data. The participants were well-known for their ability to articulate ideas in written and oral format and, therefore, unlikely to be hesitant to share ideas and experiences with the researcher. This lack of hesitation is a key factor for this type of data collection according to Creswell (1998). Each interview was transcribed verbatim by a paid professional signing a confidentiality agreement attached as Appendix B.

An interview protocol or interview guide (Creswell, 1998), was used to organize the interview questions into the two-stage format and is included as Appendix C. This guide provided structure for the interviews and a guide for the researcher's notes. The participants could choose not to answer any question and continue with the interview.

Procedures

The specific process by which the participants were sampled and interviewed was as follows:

1. Participants were contacted first through email obtained from public websites and/or personal contact. When they agreed to participate in the study, each participant was given the Informed Consent document and a copy of the interview guide to reflect on before the interview.
2. The participants were asked to provide several dates on which they would be available for the interviews with a minimum of two days between the first and second interviews.
3. The participants were asked which method was preferred for the interview, either using the telephone or Skype as the means for communicating.
4. At the agreed upon time, each participant was called by the researcher. The participant acknowledged that he was being recorded and was asked if he had any additional information or requests of the researcher prior to continuing. Detailed notes were taken by the researcher while conducting the recorded interviews using a note-taking guide with question prompts (See Appendix D).
5. An Olympus WS-803 Digital Voice Recorder with a microphone attached to the telephone receiver or Athtek Skype recording software on the computer was used

to capture the data accurately and was approved by the participants. The digital recordings are stored in a locked cabinet in the researchers' home office for three years after the analysis is complete and subsequent articles can be published as described in the Informed Consent Form in Appendix A. Being recorded was voluntary, and only used to verify accuracy. A total of 16 interviews were recorded. Each participant could continue in the study without being digitally recorded. In all cases, the researcher also took handwritten notes during the interview in case the recording process failed.

6. The participants were asked a series of interview questions (See Appendix C) using the interview guide. Questions 1-5 were used for the first interview, while questions 6-15 were used for the second interview in order to improve the flow of the interviews.
7. The recorded interviews were then converted into mp3s and sent to the transcriptionist.
8. The interview transcripts were reviewed by the researcher for accuracy, adding information and names from the field notes when not transcribed correctly by the transcriptionist.
9. Using an unrestricted open-coding process, which is used to inquire broadly and identify emergent themes from the raw text (Berg & Lume, 2012), the transcribed interviews were independently reviewed by the researcher and a second coder in order to identify the preliminary codes and code descriptions (See Appendix E)

10. The researcher and second coder met to discuss the preliminary themes that emerged and develop a consensus on the category and code descriptions (See Appendix F) used in the recoding process.
11. All of the interviews were uploaded into the NVivo10 computer program, which made them accessible for the coding.
12. Then, the second coder mentored the researcher on how to work with the program.
13. The researcher developed additional codes and descriptions, adding a journal component and memos for each participant along with alias initials to maintain anonymity throughout the process.
14. The NVivo10 software program was used to assist in providing a systematic organization system for analyzing and categorizing the data. The themes were categorized in the program as Tree Nodes and, into these codes, phrases from each interview were highlighted (coded) and “dragged” under the corresponding theme/tree node by the researcher in the recoding process.
15. The sub-categories were created to breakdown the larger tree nodes. A screen shot of the matrix is provided (See Appendix G).
16. A journal of the researcher’s thoughts and descriptive information about the participants was kept in the NVivo10 program, along with the individual memos relating to the participant feelings, comments and experiences, which were not coded.
17. Then, the researcher developed a list of themes and assertion as the basis for discussion of the findings.

Interview Questions

Interview One

The purpose of this interview was to capture a narrative description depicting the life stories of the study participants, all Baby Boomer Generation ECE leaders. Within this first interview, they described events, people and places that influenced their career paths and supported their significant work in the field. The questions asked during this interview were as follows:

1. What events, people and issues influenced your career path and shaped the significant work that you have done in the ECE field?
2. How has the ECE field, as a whole, changed throughout your career?
3. Reflecting on your own leadership contributions, what do you believe has made the most impact on the ECE field in terms of research, practice and policy development?
4. What has kept you engaged in the ECE field all of these years?
5. When would you feel is the right time for you to transition out of the field?

Interview Two

The purpose of this interview was to gain the participants' views on leadership in the ECE field as well as ways in which to support contemporary generations through their career development. The following questions were asked during this interview.

6. How would you define leadership in the ECE field?
7. What would you say are the key points that helped you develop as a leader?
8. What was your motivation for taking on leadership roles?
9. What do you believe the upcoming generation of ECE professionals can learn

from the Baby Boomer Generation of leaders?

10. What qualities do you believe the next generation of ECE professionals will need in order to lead the field into the future?
11. How best would you advise a new professional to plan a career path in leadership?
12. If you could predict where the ECE field is heading based on your years of experience, what do you think might be in store for the field?
13. What excites you and, in contrast, concerns you about the future of the ECE field?
14. What opportunities do you believe must be developed to support the next generation of leaders?
15. What do professional organizations, such as the NAEYC, need to do in order to stay relevant in this changing world?

Data Analysis

After the interviews were complete, they were transcribed and checked for accuracy. In order to increase the validity and reliability of the qualitative findings, the researcher kept a note-taking guide and used a second coder who independently developed a list of codes and descriptions (See Appendix E). In addition, memos and a journal that documented the coding process were kept within the NVivo10 program. Memos help coders reflect on the data analysis process and maintain a record of how they developed codes and themes.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1998) data analysis contains three linked sub-processes: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification. The analysis process used in this study is identified in Figure 2.

Data reduction is the development of a “conceptual framework by which to organize research questions, cases and instruments” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998 p. 180).

The two-stage interview process utilized in this research study provided a natural

organization format that could be used to reduce the data into categories from which the themes developed.

Data Reduction	Data Display	Conclusions/Verification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Interview Protocol •Stage 1: Life History •Stage 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Views on Leadership •Views on Supporting Leadership Development in Contemporary Generations •Views on the Future of ECE Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Open Coding and Emergent Themes with Preliminary Definitions •Common Events and Historic Markers •Journal Notes and Memos •Collect Descriptive Data •Recoding Using NVivo10 Software to Assure the Accuracy of the Themes •Clustering of Themes and Experiences Explained with Additional Literature Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Fact-Checking with an ECE Professional •Compare Results to Adaptive Leadership Model •Findings and Assertions Discussed in Response to Each Research Question

Figure 2. Data analysis approach as described by Denzin and Lincoln (1998).

Data display is defined as the organized assembly of the data that “permits conclusions to be drawn” or gives the researcher a format for making meaning of the themes (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 180). In this study, an unrestricted open-coding process was used to create a consensus on the list of categories, codes and definitions used in the recoding process. For each code, a discussion between the researcher and second coder took place in order to define each and find consensus on the overarching categories.

The last part of data analysis was verification, which can include a wide range of tactics, such as clustering, noting the themes’ triangulation or fact-checking with the participants. For this study, reliability was achieved by determining the accuracy of the full verbatim transcripts, comparing them to the notes and recordings of the actual

interviews and developing the independent codes. This approach allowed the researcher to identify specific passages that fit into the preliminary themes and then compare them with the second coder's passages in the final consensus process. Conclusions and assertions were then created from the data, which produced a clustering of themes and experiences shared by the participants. These themes were compared with the adaptive leadership model, which was used as the conceptual framework for the study. A discussion on the findings of the study will be undertaken in Chapter 5.

Utilizing the NVivo10 software, the researcher used a computer-assisted analysis to re-code the data. Using a code-and-retrieve method, which many computer-based software programs recognize, is not always helpful when working with contextual themes (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998), but can be applied to textual level operations. As such, using the code-and-retrieve method was helpful in regard to identifying specific historical events that all of the participants had in common as members of the Baby Boomer Generation. As this study examined the participants' life stories, perceptions of leadership and how this information informs what the ECE field must do in the future to predict, support and develop future leaders in the ECE field, the computer-assisted analysis gave validity to the verification component of the data analysis through the re-coding procedures. Since the researcher is not skilled in using all aspects of the NVivo10 software program, the inputting of codes into nodes, adding definitions and uploading transcripts was conducted by a hired, second coder familiar with the software who signed a confidentiality agreement (See Appendix B). The creation of the themes and re-coding of the textual passages was done by the researcher, who sorted the data by themes and made journal notes about the descriptive information and historical events.

Human Subjects Review

The Human Subjects Review protocol form was submitted to and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of North Dakota (approved protocol number 201312-194). The Informed Consent form for this study is included in Appendix C. The data collection took place between January 2014 and March 2014.

Validity

Glense (2006) noted that “part of demonstrating the trustworthiness of your data is to realize the limitations of your study.” The validity of qualitative research has continually met foes in those who believe that the positivistic approach is the best way to eliminate bias. Yet, the relationship of the researcher to participants allowed for personal stories to be told in ways that gave deep contextual meaning to the theory development. In this study, the use of reflexivity was important in regard to examining for bias when interpreting the data. Using a fact checker, who is a member of the ECE profession, served to identify any researcher bias that might have entered into the analysis.

Summary

The methodology and research design for this study was qualitative in nature and used a two-stage interview protocol. The purpose of this study was to examine the career paths of eight exemplary Baby Boomer Generation ECE professionals who have made significant contributions to the field during the past 42 years (1972-2014) in the areas of research, practice/pedagogy and policy development. The study examined the participants’ early career development in order to ascertain how their leadership attributes were developed over time and whether any commonalties could be applied to the contemporary ECE field.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the career paths of exemplary Baby Boomer Generation professionals who have made significant contributions to the field of ECE in the last 42 years in order to ascertain what can be learned about leadership transitions via stories of their lives and choices. Data was collected through a two-stage interviewing process. Eight participants were interviewed twice with each interview lasting over an hour. Information was collected on their personal career paths, influences that impacted their leadership development and their views on transitioning out of the field. The study gleaned knowledge on what has guided the participants' ECE career choices regarding leadership roles in research, pedagogy and policy development as well as the lessons learned from their experiences that can be used to help grow the next generation of leaders in the field of ECE. Common themes were discovered through the analysis of the transcribed interviews. These themes revealed the participants' lived experiences during the historically significant period of the Civil Rights Movement, which had a profound impact on the participants' developed philosophies, values and sense of mission-driven purpose that played out throughout their careers.

This chapter presents descriptive information about the group of participants. It also provides information on the two categories of data (i.e., "Leaders in ECE" and the "Field of ECE") that were developed through the analysis as well as several sub-themes

that emerged under each category. In conclusion, a discussion of the findings and assertions of each category is summarized in order to share the general opinions of the participants' responses on the future of the ECE field's ability to stay viable and relevant in the future.

Descriptive Data

Newspapers are filled with an abundance of sensationalized stories about how the Baby Boomer population will transition toward retirement. Advertisements tell of condos for sale in warm places, the latest health trends and how to plan for financial security all aimed at the Boomer Generation's subsequent looming retirement years. These advertisements are seen as trying to influence this population's decisions about how and when to transition out of their careers. Curiosity about how ECE professionals, still active in meaningful careers with accumulated influence and power, will pass on the mantle of leadership to the younger generation was of interest to the researcher.

This study included eight participants who can be classified as members of the Baby Boomer Generation or born on the cusp of the generation -- the years just prior to 1946. Of the eight participants, two were male and six were female. The birth year of each participant is identified in Table 1 and shows that three of the participants were born in 1942, two were born in 1947 and one was born in each of the following years: 1939, 1945 and 1950. All of the participants were born and raised east of the Mississippi River and had university or teaching experiences on the East Coast early in their career. Midcareer moves found three of the participants permanently settled on the West Coast at the time of the study. Five of the participants are grandparents, two had children with no

grandchildren and one never had children. This descriptive data provides background information for the theme of “Retirement and Transitions.”

Not reported in Table 1 is the fact that all, but one of the participants worked with young children early in their careers as teachers, researchers or, in one case, as a back-up, in-home family care provider. This descriptive information serves as background for the “Doing Time” theme. Seven of the participants attended or worked at colleges known historically for being top training institutions for early childhood education: Bank Street, Pacific Oaks, Wheelock Colleges, Erickson Institute and Syracuse University. This data serves as background for the discussion developed under the themes “Being Mentored by Others” and “Being a Mentor.” All, but one participant asked at the onset of the first interview who else was participating in the study and if they would know them. Throughout the data collection process, the participants surprisingly mentioned one another as influential to the field or as a member of their peer group, providing an informal member-check in that the participants recognized each other as being in their peer group.

Six of the participants started a successful business or was one of the founding members of a nationally recognized corporation or project that directly influenced the field of ECE. This data serves as background for the themes “Theory Builders” and “Career Challenges and Choices.”

Table 1

Description of the Participants

Participant #	Gender		USA Geographical Location	C=Children
	M=Male	Year	Early Career, Then Later	N=No Children
	F=Female	Born	Career	GC=Grandchildren
1	F	1942	South Midcareer, Then West Coast	GC
2	F	1945	East Coast	C
3	F	1942	East Coast	GC
4	M	1939	East Coast-South, Midcareer, Then West Coast	C
5	F	1950	East Coast	N
6	M	1947	East Coast Midcareer move West Coast	GC
7	F	1942	East Coast	GC
8	F	1947	Midwest-West Coast Midcareer move East Coast	GC

Staying Relevant

How does a profession take steps to renew, refresh and re-envision itself in an effort to maintain relevancy as society changes? This question is one constantly asked by the early childhood profession. Dr. Valora Washington, in a recent webinar, profoundly

stated “back in that period in the ‘60s and ‘70s, people believed more than they knew, but now we know more than we do”(NAEYC & Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership, 2014). The Baby Boomer Generation of ECE professionals had an intuitive sense of what curriculum and pedagogy should look like with research slowly lagging behind practice. Staying relevant during the turbulent times of the 1960s and 1970s, a period of civil unrest marked by racial and gender barriers being demolished saw the predominately female ECE profession driven by a core value of believing that all children were deserving of a good educational start. The War on Poverty ushered in the monumental Head Start Program, forever changing the face of education for our youngest and poorest children.

Staying relevant throughout the past 42 years required constant reflection, as noted by one study participant identified as ND, observed that the field of ECE was always asking "Is this getting us where we want to go? Is this creating some problems that we're going to have to undo if we don't self-correct right now?" It was this type of reflection that drove the NAEYC to lead the ECE field through an often painful process of developing policy and positions statements that defined the high quality practices that supported young children and families. Many of the study participants give a voice to cultural and societal changes that affected the field of ECE. As research on young children's development was rapidly expanding, the use of technology became a mechanism for the field to see what best practices looked like through television, magazines and, yes, filmstrips. Internet communication provided the ability to rally advocates across the nation and push public policy agendas forward, such as the “Act for Better Childcare” or the” Child Development Block Grants.” Staying relevant was

motivation for all of the study participants in regard to becoming authors and theory builders as well as inventing new curriculum and programs.

This study found that the traits of passion and persistence were the motivation for the eight participants to continue their exemplary work in the field of ECE. Staying relevant and responding to the changing needs of the ECE profession required of the participants' research about the developing child, teaching practices that provoke meaningful and culturally relevant curriculum, and finding the resources necessary to grow the childcare industry. The participants are still teachers and lifelong learners ready to share the lessons that they have learned from the past 42 years as mentors to future leaders. The take away messages that they ultimately wish to share with new professionals is to stay relevant by staying ahead of the game, be persistent in their pursuits of keeping the mission on what is best for children and re-envision the field in the way that the Boomers did early in their careers. These thoughts were captured throughout the analysis of the interviews and sorted into two categories: "Leaders in ECE" and the "Field of ECE." Under these two categories emerged 19 themes that were condensed down to 13 with 6 sub-themes. There were 96 codes developed and used in the analysis of the transcribed interviews and notes. There were 19 codes that developed to identify feelings of participants throughout the interviews (See Appendix E).

The category of leaders in ECE looked at the ways in which the participants entered the field and the historical context that cemented their sense of purpose and vision, their perceptions of whether their positions of responsibility were offered by chance or happenstance and the role that their mentors played in their career paths. The themes and sub-themes discussed under the category of "Leaders in ECE" are:

- Historical context, figures and places
- Career challenges, choice and chance
- Theory builders
- Doing the time
- Leadership
 - Characteristics and roles
 - Burnout and renewal
 - Power and influence
- Mentoring
 - Being a mentor
 - Being mentored by others
 - Generational differences
- Retirement and transition
- Assertions of category Leaders in ECE

Within the category identified as the “Field of ECE” is discussed participants perceptions of how the ECE field has changed over 42 years and their experiences as a leader within it. The themes discussed under this category are:

- ECE characteristics
- Straddling the tension
- NAEYC
- Advocacy and policy
- Publishing and training
- Future of the field

- Assertions of category field of ECE

These two categories and their themes will be discussed in detail throughout chapter IV. Evidence is documented with testimony and experiences shared by the participants, giving a collective voice to the themes developed and the assertions that have surfaced from the data analysis process. Each participant's identity is hidden with randomly selected initials to identify statements that can be attributed to each. The themes, definitions and examples are listed as Appendix F.

Category - Leaders in ECE

Being a leader is not something that the participants aspired to be, but mentors saw a glint in their eye, a willingness in them to try something not done before or an ability to articulate what practice or research was demonstrating in ways others in the field could understand.

Most of us who ended up becoming leaders in the early childhood field didn't necessarily set out that way. Probably most of us started out because we wanted to work with young children and be a teacher in the classroom. And that was certainly true for me. I would never have envisioned myself where I am today. It never was even a goal for me to be that way. And I think what brings us into leadership positions is a passion for what we're doing and a vision of what it is we want to create. And a lot has to do with the opportunity that presents itself.

(participant TC)

Many of the participants in the study entered the field as teachers or young researchers, finding their passion for the work through a mentor, initial course taken or first job.

I volunteered to teach in a nursery school at the 92nd Street Y nursery school in New York City, which was 2 blocks from my house. It was a wonderful, early childhood program. And I loved it. And the director of the program said to me, you know, if I decided to go into early childhood and graduate from college, I should come back and she would give me a job. So I majored in child development at Cornell with Urie Bronfenbrenner, who is incredible. It was one of the reasons I really wanted to go there. And he's such a dynamic professor, so inspiring. And when I graduated from there, I went back to 92nd Street Y and she gave me a job. (participant EE)

Their first jobs were often low paying, with long days and hard work, but the participants saw the challenges of working with young children as an opportunity to do something good and make a difference in the world. These experiences were the early springboards that gave them opportunities to deepen their personal philosophies on education, providing an early grounding point for many of their beliefs about children and much of their future leadership work as shared by this participant.

Maybe I'll look into teaching nursery school. Wouldn't that be fun? I got a job teaching in a childcare center with minimal qualifications, obviously. I mean I really was not qualified. I did need to take a couple of courses in the summer to get this job. Anyway, I got hired as the full-time teacher in a childcare center, an 8-hour day job. That was obviously the turning point of my entire life. It was a huge shifting of what I would have done otherwise. I started there, and again I joke and tell the story... that's probably was the most memorable day of my entire life, that first day of that childcare center work. It was one of the longest days of

my life. I can almost remember every moment of it, and the days building up to it. The day itself, I was just at such a loss of what to do...I seriously considered not going back. And then I realized that I had a choice not to go back, but the kids didn't. They would be there, just as they had been there when the last teacher quit on them and the one before that. (participant TC)

Boomer Generation ECE leaders felt that they were making a difference in the lives of children and their early jobs provided experiences that grounded their theories and practices.

Participants were always thinking about what was good for children and had a belief in a child's amazing capacity to learn. This belief, which guided their practices and research, consumed their thoughts as they developed theories and sought answers to nagging questions. Many of these beliefs were developed as a result of coming into the field of ECE as a young professional during the civil rights movement.

We didn't say, "Oh, I want to be a leader here." Right? Some of us fell into it. ...

We did grow up through the Civil Rights Movement. And we, or at least I, came into it wanting to do better by poor kids and families and people. (Participant DE)

These young ECE leaders had a personal and philosophical belief about what was best for children and shared these beliefs with staff and students and mirrored them in the research they conducted throughout their careers. One participant stated:

I saw myself as committed to social change. I wanted to see the country be better, do better, treat their children better, treat people without power and potency better, and that was the thing that ran me. And I would speak up at faculty meetings and I would propose things to see if we could get funded and include

people who hadn't been included before. It was more mission-driven--I never really thought about leadership that much. Well maybe I did--I mean, because the thing that I didn't want to do ever was get stuck in doing some work that I didn't believe in and I had to do it. And so I think I might have created positions for myself where I was pretty much always the director. (participant SM)

Boomer generation ECE leaders often had an intuitive “sense of knowing” of what was required to do the right thing for children. This sense of knowing drove them to be researchers, authors, architects of public policies, developers of businesses that filled a niche and builders who could conceptualize new ideas and programs. The participants often saw their career path as more by chance than choice, with a mentor opening a door of opportunity and sparking a passion for the work.

I think just having the passion (for the work) and being in the right place at the right time, or being in a place where your skills are needed (was by chance). You don't know how you're going to do it, but you know that if you could figure it out, you could make a difference. So I think that passion and commitment to making a difference in our field really drove me. And, you know, another piece of that is being willing to take risks. We have to be able to do something, step up when we feel like we can't do it, and just be willing to make mistakes and stumble along a little bit and just feel incompetent at first. Being willing to take risks is an important part. If you're only doing things that are safe, you can't become a leader. You can't grow. (Participant EE)

Being a “risk taker” was a shared attribute of the participants who often found themselves out on a limb, not sure if the ventures they were undertaking would be

successful or worthwhile, but felt compelled to try because they were creating something new -- like a business or training guide needed by the ECE field.

So I invested \$3,200 and created a filmstrip and 100 copies of them. I got a friend to play the dulcimer--that was the music--I got another friend to narrate it.

Another friend on a Selectric typewriter, we did a little booklet that went with it.

And they made 100 copies...And then I pretended there was a company named (name of business). There was no such thing--it was just my home address.

(Participant EE)

Another example of risk taking and starting a business can be seen from one participant who saw a need for an administrator's resource guide that provided tips on how to run a successful childcare business. Starting a business in the basement of his house, hand-typing mailing labels and anxiously awaiting for the first subscription checks to arrive, proved to be the shaky start to a 25 year venture that saw even the mailman in cahoots.

The mailman used to have tea parties with the kids in our family childcare home, so he knew what we were doing (selling subscriptions), and he knew we were anxious for the mail. One day he knocked on the door and showed us this big batch of mail. He was probably more excited than we were...There was such a need for it (information on how to be an administrator of a childcare program) at that time. There was nothing (for childcare directors), so it did grow really fast.

We were able to succeed. It wasn't really a straight-line plan to do this. Just sort of one thing led to another, and pretty soon we were in the (publishing) business.

(Participant SO)

The participants described themselves as patient, persistent, intellectual and collaborative. The leadership attributes that the participants developed are important for the Boomer Generation to share while mentoring new ECE leaders. These attributes will be discussed later under the theme of “Leadership Characteristics and Roles.”

Forming alliances with peers proved to be a source of support for ECE leaders on variety of issues, not just ECE. These close relationships with peers and mentors gave them encouragement and support to do remarkable collaborative work, which was not always easy with so many diverse perspectives coming to the table. Over the years, the Boomer ECE leaders found fulfilling professional opportunities for collaboration on books and research projects with their peers and mentors. It was these professional and personal alliances that helped garner the credibility and support that propelled the study participants to esteem and recognition of the influence of their work in the ECE field and made them worthy of this study.

Theme 1: Historical Contexts, Figures and Places

The early experiences of the participants occurred because they were young, impressionable and thrust into the center of social and cultural unrest. As children, they grew up in the 1950s, a time when segregation was lived in real ways. Each participant was born or raised east of the Mississippi River, and felt the pains of racism as one participant stated:

I spent the first eight years of my life in the segregated south, and as a very young child, seeing the "for whites only" and "for colored only" signs everywhere in the visible segregation in our little town had a profound impact on me as well, and it kind of seared in my brain a notion of unfairness, and that has certainly influence

the trajectory of my life and has been very significant in my career work as well. In your youth, you are trying to sort out all these things that have been planted in you, contradictions and the things that tug at your own heartstrings and that you are trying to puzzle at in your mind, and I think all of those in their own way, you know, as well as formal education and so forth, and role models and mentors have had a strong influence on the direction I have taken in my life, or my life has taken me, however it goes. (Participant ND)

Another participant's stated:

I grew up in Detroit. My father, who was very civic minded and my mother taught in the inner city. She was very active. I grew up with a lot of people (who are) part of the labor union- liberal, and I thought you were supposed to do better for people. (Participant IC)

As young professionals early in their careers, the participants felt the influence of social justice issues on their personal beliefs. The Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam War and Women's liberation movement supported a passion to do better for people and provide an equal education to all children. They questioned the ideology of traditional teaching modalities during that period of history.

It was only when I lived out of the country from 1966 to '69 in Taiwan at the height of the Vietnam War, and I went there as a pretty naive kid in the sense of believing America was trying to make the world safe for democracy. And seeing first hand things, that just shook my world, and at the same time, the civil rights movement was erupting in the US. And so, um, when I started teaching on the military base, I was just perplexed. I just didn't--I didn't know what it meant to be

American; I didn't know what it meant to be a teacher...I didn't live on the military base. I lived in a Taiwanese community, and they ask, "Why does your country do such-and-such?" I thought, "Oh, now those are the questions in education that we need to be pursuing." The "why" questions, a lot less than the "what" questions. And I think that really influenced my thinking, my trying to carve out a little path for myself. But I really didn't want to do a drill-and-skill thing and the little reading groups and all the things I had been trained to do that felt pretty meaningless. But I didn't have any other influence around me shaping me in a different direction. (Participant ND)

The early training and educational opportunities of the participants took on a sense of purpose to treat all people fairly and give children equal opportunities for schooling. Often the first teaching experiences of the participants were with poor families in Head Start programs or, as one participant shared, running a new research project in southern Florida.

I hired I think it was about 10 people. Most of them were African American because most of the poor in that part of Florida were African American. We had two white home visitors and I think eight African American home visitors. I spent eight weeks training them on these learning games and using notions like Piaget's cause-and-effect relationships, object permanence and means and its relationships but turned them into a much simpler notion of tool use and imitation and things like that. And while I was teaching them about these games, they were teaching me about what growing up rural and poor in northern Florida was like. And I just became captivated by the experience. I was young. We were bringing minorities

into the universities; that really wasn't happening. So I was dealing with social rights issues and all these kinds of things with this wonderful notion of helping babies learn better. So Walter Cronkite had a television show at the time. I think it was called The Twenty-First Century. He came down and shot footage of what we were doing and interviewed me on the Kodak show. And then the governor flew down and was all excited about what we were doing. And it really kind of got me into both civil rights and also the importance of getting in early (infant and toddler care). (Participant SM)

Working with the poorest children living in the most vulnerable households was a common experience among several of the participants. The War on Poverty that developed legislation for the monumental Head Start Program impacted the participants while they were in their impressionable twenties and their experiences forever planted a seed of personal passion to do what is right for children living in historically marginalized communities.

I was 25 years old. I was extremely shy...The first thing we had to do was put in wells and electricity in these twenty-one centers. They were, you know, on the back roads of Mississippi. They were keeping the program going without any funds at all in their little homes...this was going to be a brand new Head Start program. It was going to serve 900 children... And I applied for a job as one of the teachers... (the women who interviewed her) said to me, "You're not going to be a teacher in this program. You're going to be the Ed Coordinator." And I said, "There's no way. I don't know anything about training teachers. I'm a teacher." And she said, "Do you realize you're the only person in the state of Mississippi

with a master's degree in early childhood?" She said, "You're not leaving this room till you agree to do this job," a job I had no idea how to do... That was what changed my life. (Participant EE)

Female participants found that they had more opportunities available to attend college, but still experienced expectations from others that they should pursue traditional paths of nursing or teaching. The women's liberation movement opened up career diversification, but, as discussed later in the chapter under the "Future of the Field" theme, the available career choices were nothing like what is available to women today.

I was like most people of my age. I went to college at the traditional time, and I didn't have any particular career path. It wasn't necessarily expected of women at that time. I majored in English, and that was kind of interesting because at the time I was just enjoying my college. (Participant TC)

Many ECE leaders greatly influenced the participant's early careers. Mentioned throughout the interviews were ECE leaders of the Silent Generation, whose professional body of work or style of leadership led the field and served as a model for the participants. Listed multiple times by all of the participants were: Lillian Katz, Barbara Bowman, Bettye Caldwell, Helen Taylor, Carol Seefeldt, Jenny Klein, Alice Honig, Betty Jones, Ira Gordon and Gwen Morgan. As young professionals, the participants often sought out prestigious universities for training in child study. Bank Street College, Pacific Oaks College, University of Maryland, Erickson Institute and Syracuse University were common alma maters for their graduate schools. The participants mentioned how their persistence paid off when seeking training under particular faculty members renowned as child study specialist.

From the first day of the first class I knew that that's what I would do. I just loved it. I loved it for a number of reasons. I loved it because the field of child study was being invented at the time in the '50s and '60s... There was an excitement about learning that was not true in other areas of study, at least that I had taken. And they (faculty) were so excited about what they were doing. And they involved students not as empty vessels to whom you give knowledge but as people who could help uncover knowledge and how children grow and develop. And so it was a very exciting major. (Participant TC)

One participant stated that the university that the members of the profession attended as well as the philosophical leanings of the faculty tended to create the same beliefs in the students.

It was the institutions where I was engaged, they were so closely aligned in terms of their philosophy about children. That was for me, a very important element in my career path because, you know, I was young and didn't really have any experience working with kids and families. And I believed everything I learned in school...it consolidated for me in my early work. (Participant DE)

During this period, the field of ECE was being invented with the Boomers shaping the field. It was the birth of the ECE profession as we now know it.

Early childhood was starting to appear all over the country, almost overnight. The interest in children in publicly funded programs was growing rapidly. This was 1969, okay, so this was right at the time--and this, I think, is critical in the lives and careers of people who are my age or who came into the field at this point. Head Start was 3 years old. (Participant DE)

The Head Start program ushered in a new era and allowed those in the field to become more diversified, educated and professional.

Theme 2- Career Challenges and Choices:

Does one choose a career or does a career call to you? The overwhelming response from the study participants was that the career path unfolded before them, almost choosing them. As one participant (DE) said, “I was drawn to working with children, but did not really want to teach” and another (TC) reported “I just stepped from one thing to another just through luck and circumstance.” Yet, they all became leaders in the ECE field.

All the jobs I ever got, I didn't apply for. The jobs I applied for, I never got--when I look back on my life. Basically, in terms of my personal experience, it was people who identified you as a potential leader, as opposed to you thinking "This is the path I'm going to set out to take. (Participant TC)

The study participants entered the ECE field early in their careers, many times as one of the youngest employees on the job or project. They were given authority early on and succeeded, as noted by participant SM in this statement “at the age of 29, I was operating something that was very visible and very excited.” Another participant (DE) shared this story, “so, here I am at 22 with a master's in early childhood, having been exposed to that rigorous curriculum at Erikson (Institute), and teaching now at a community college. And I just kind of stumbled into these things. I was just in the right place at the right time.”

This group of highly motivated young professionals had growing careers in their 20s. As Head Start training coordinators, college teachers and program directors for

projects with hefty grant support, they were encouraged by mentors who saw something special in them and followed their careers, opening professional doors for them.

(A mentor commenting to participant TC) “You don't need any more courses.

You need to do your actual real meaningful work for credit. You need an internship.” So she arranged with ... the chief of the education branch at the Head Start Bureau in the federal government, to do an internship...I was engaged in work that was using my early childhood knowledge and ability to write. I am a good writer because I started out in English. So, then I was connecting that to content knowledge-- to policy. I didn't even really realize it at the time.

In some cases, these mentors were role models, but, later, became supportive colleagues who saw leadership potential and found ways to encourage and support the study participants.

Throughout the participants’ careers, many started businesses or organizations or developed new programs. They all participated in the building the ECE profession by seeing a need and using their gifts to fill the gaps between the knowledge and resources.

I went to work for the federal government for the model cities program...For me, working with the model cities program, I got to see all sorts of social programs-- housing, manpower, health, welfare, early education, etc. Seeing all these programs from the federal level, the one that really struck me as making a difference was childcare because all the others were just sort of Band-Aids on problems, but early education was changing people from day one. (Participant SO)

Working with childcare center directors became the life work of this participant who has been a leader in regard to giving a voice to “the real experts,” those working daily to help families balance work and home with smooth transitions.

The stories from the participants focused on putting businesses and programs together all had similar plots. Few financial resources existed, friends and peers were relied upon for collaboration and the ECE leaders were persistent in their beliefs about succeeding and staying the course as one participant (EE) shared,

I was actually (going to) incorporate it and just officially focus on curriculum. I wasn't even doing assessment then, just curriculum and training. It was going to be a mission-driven company enhancing the quality of early childhood programs, especially those programs that serve the most vulnerable children. We really are connected to the field. And that's how it got launched in 1988--26 years ago. That's kind of how it all started, just by self-publishing. I had some consultants who worked with me....I wanted to do what I knew the field needed. I didn't want to depend on grants. And so I found that by publishing materials and providing training, I could generate enough money to continue to develop more materials.

Another participant (SM) stated,

I was invited to meet with a group of people at the mental health/child study center in Bethesda, Maryland. Stanley Greenspan and Bob Milver who were at the National Institute of Mental Health at the time pulled together some people who were interested in social and muscle development of infants. And we met for a number of years and finally created an organization, and it was called the National

Center for Clinical Infant Programs, which changed its name 15 or 20 years later to Zero to Three.

A third participant (IC) stated,

I was there 24 years. I liked organizing around issues and had plenty of opportunities to work with great people. I was famous for doing a big campaign in D.C. that got lots more people on the food stamp program...and we got volunteers mobilized and did calls. And this was before, fax, e-mail, anything. And we greatly increased our food stamp participation.

In several situations, it was spouses and families of the participants who provide the long-term support for the business ventures, as seen in this excerpt:

In our wedding vows we said that we would work together. I'm not sure why we put that in there, but we did...We took a year off. We both quit our jobs, went to Europe, spent a year just driving around Europe on \$5 a day, and during the process we decided what we wanted to do was start a childcare center. We came back in April or May or something like that, and we were homeless, penniless, automobile-less and pregnant. I wanted to learn how to set up a childcare center because that's what we wanted to do. I wanted to learn all I needed to know about the administrative side of it, and there was nothing. (Participant SO)

Finding a need, taking the risk and garnering the support of mentors, peers and family members proved to be leadership attributes that allowed these ECE leaders to thrive and grow with a professional field that was rapidly changing.

During the 80s and 90s, more people were entering the field with little formal education as the childcare industry expanded to meet the demands of working families.

The NAEYC, Head Start, the National Association of Childcare Resource and Referral Association (NACCRA, now known as Childcare Aware) and others developed standards, curriculum and credentialing programs that reflected the workforce needs of the field of ECE. The NAEYC grew to over 100,000 members by the late 1990s. Legislative efforts around the country saw childcare regulations blossoming with requirements for staff training and professional development. The Child Development Associates credential (CDA) that was originally used primarily by Head Start and military programs to train staff members was now moved to the newly developed Council of Professional Recognition arm of the NAEYC. Curriculum and assessment instruments, such as the Creative Curriculum developed by Teaching Strategies, the Environmental Rating Scales developed by Thelma Harms et. al and the Developmentally Appropriate Practices created by the NAEYC, were cornerstones used to measure the quality of childcare programs. The study participants played a critical role as theory builders and authors of many newly developed programs and policies that influenced the dramatic growth of the ECE field.

Theme 3- Theory Builders

The study participants often saw a need to do something differently and wrestled with how to articulate it to the general ECE field. It started with questioning previous knowledge or a practice and working through an internal struggle that put them in a state of disequilibrium as seen in this comment by one participant. “I couldn’t quite figure out what was wrong. I knew what was wrong with what they were doing, but I couldn’t figure out how to fix it.” (Participant DE)

The participants often searched for ways to demonstrate or explain their ideas in ways others in the field could understand. One participant stated, “How do I take what I know about good early childhood practices and how do I make that really easy for teachers to understand?”

Participants found an ability to listen attentively to their inner voices about what was good for children and compare it to what they had learned in their university work in order to construct new paradigms about ideas that often took years to have research proven correct.

I think when we are talking about me as a person, that this is where I was coming from. I really don't know why. I felt inside myself that this is what children needed in order to prosper. And what was happening was that the research was starting to bear me out. (participant SM)

Often one idea or project led to another and another. “You think you've done something, and then the next thing you know, that leads to something new as an issue.”

The body of work attributed to the participants throughout their careers changed the face of ECE. The participants had the ability to think in broad ways and construct new ideas. They did not see themselves as theory builders, yet they brought new ideas to the ECE field. One participant stated:

I don't think of myself as a theorist... I think what I try to do is bring forward the things that I think are really worth closely examining and find a way to integrate ideas into our work from a variety of places and to try to offer ways to do that, as opposed to saying, "This is how you should do it, or this is what you should do.”
(Participant ND)

What set them apart from others was their ability to articulate ideas concisely. They were excellent writers or had the ability to use pictures in filmstrip or photography to share an idea. One participant stated,

People had a hard time summarizing what had happened at the meeting, and that happens to be a skill that I'm good at. I can weave together what a lot of people have said and make sense of it. (Participant TC)

Another participant (FH) noted, "I am a good writer because I started out in English, and I was able to bring all those skills and communicate/write well."

Participant (FH) continued,

What I discovered that I could do was to take--this was before videography was doable—because I am a photographer, take a camera into a classroom and tell the story of a teacher and get into the mind of that teacher about how she made decisions. You could then construct a philosophy of education around--you know, there were guiding principles obviously, but there was also a window into how really good teachers make decisions. That turned out to be very instructive in the field.

These ECE leaders were the theory builders who played with ideas as seen in the following statement by one participant (FH).

My goal was always not to do research in the traditional sense of taking six people's theories and adding one little widget to it, you know, in the traditional academic sense...It was to take on the biggest challenges--I mean, creating a theory of how parents grow and change. I knew that there was real tension between parents and teachers. I tried to understand that.

They challenged the traditional understandings and ideologies of the ECE field.

And we brought to the table the concept of pluralism, which is different from multiculturalism. Pluralism allows diverse groups to maintain their identity or maintain their customs and traditions that are associated with their cultural identities, at the same time to participate in a common society. So you don't have to lose who you are, in order to become a part of the community, which we thought one of the limitations of their humanistic views. Everybody's human, and so what you celebrate is the ways in which you are alike and you ignore the ways in which you're different. That's the way we saw humanism. Pluralism—it strived to have individuals maintain their cultural identities first as a basis for participating in a common society. So, once we figured that out, we were like, “Okay, we got it, we got it, we got it.” (Participant DE)

Whether developing a detailed public policy plan to deliver childcare services, starting a new research organization or create training modules, their ideas and theories were being used across America. What started as internal questioning about well-worn ideas that guided the field of child study soon became grounding points for changed practices with financial support from Ford, Carnegie, Bush and other foundations and corporations willing to back the work of these proven experts.

Theme 4- Doing Time

Many participants discussed the importance and value of time spent as a classroom teacher being an important foundation for a career in the ECE field. These statements often reflected a judgment around whether time in the classroom was essential to being a leader in the field as seen by this participant (EE) statement:

I don't know any leader in early childhood education who I admire and look up to who didn't start in a classroom. I think being grounded in the life of a classroom and what it's like to work with young children and the joys and challenges is a critical part of what makes us good leaders, is being able to connect to people and to know what it is that they're struggling with each day and what motivates them to go and continue their work.

Several of the participants were clear that growing leadership in the field of ECE needed to come from within and that “doing time” in the classroom provided the background necessary to share what it is like to have your feet on the ground, day in and day out, working with families. It gave the participants authority to speak with an authentic voice representing the field.

People need to be in the classroom for a while or be a director of a program or really get to know what programs are about and have that basic foundation of experience because it's your experience that you're sharing with other people. That makes you an effective leader, your ability to share what you personally have experienced and how something works well. (Participant EE)

On the flip side of the “doing time” theme, several participants made it known that they did not see themselves as part of the profession and, yet, their contributions to the field had immense impact of the work of practitioners.

My work is broader than early childhood. We take a lifecycle view of our work, so we start with birth and we go through old age or even death in our work...(we work on ideas) of the changing workforce, changing family, changing

community, where there is a lot of debate, little knowledge or divergent knowledge, and to provide information that leads to action. (Participant FH)

Other participants straddled the tension of the field seeing themselves as in the field and, yet, out of the field.

I'd always considered myself an early childhood professional, but actually my job is a publisher...And I'd never considered myself that before. I had always considered myself just an early childhood professional who happens to write articles. Even after that, I still continued to see myself as part of the field.

(Participant SO)

The participants didn't move around to different jobs. There was a dedication and persistence to "do the time" where they landed as evident by one participants (DE) statement, "I just felt, "Oh, I am in my right place. Even though I didn't want to teach, teaching is what I am supposed to do. This is where I belong." So, I spent 14 years at Pacific Oaks." Another participant shared, "So I spent nine years really immersing myself in the realities of what it is like to be an administrator in a situation that is under-resourced and you're not taken seriously and so forth." (Participant ND)

The participants stayed in their professional roles until they felt that they did not have any more to offer to the job. Then, they moved on to a new venture when they heard a "calling" to use their gifts or meet an unmet need within the field. It is clear to say that they all loved what they did and found it satisfying.

I'm a teacher by nature. And that's the role I'm most comfortable in. And I guess I'd have to say that's the thing I'm best at, seizing the opportunities to teach and help and not just dispense information...And so, that's what has kept me going.

I've put myself into work situations where I can perform that role, and it's very satisfying. It's very satisfying. (Participant DE)

Theme 5- Leadership

Characteristics and Roles. The study participants have proven to have a keen sense of self. Years of self-reflection has given them the ability to look at their own personal leadership qualities and how those characteristics have served them well throughout their careers.

The thing that's important about what I did was I was able to listen very carefully. My capacity is to synthesize and negotiate differences and synthesize perspectives and knowledge and conceptualize these big ideas and then communicate them. So that's what I brought to this work, as I see it. That's a leadership role, but it's a leadership role that may look from the outside like, "Oh, I just did this, and that's what a leader is." I was a leader who really pulled people together. I had the capacity and still do have the capacity to pull disparate points of view together and figure out how to learn from those people, even if they disagree with me.

(Participant TC)

Several of the characteristics of successful leaders, such as being passionate about their work, dedicated, persistent, personable and influential, were mentioned often throughout the interviews. One participant stated, "I think what brings us into leadership positions is a passion for what we're doing and a vision of what it is we want to create" and another noted, "I think that being personable is an important part of being a good leader and sort of recognizing, you know, people's strengths." A common point made by the participants

was expressed by one participant, “I kind of fell into this. I had good instincts (Participant IC).”

Another participant (FH) stated,

I think a lot of the good early childhood principles of what makes an effective teacher translates to what makes an effective head of a company--you know, that ability to build relationships, to support people's growth, to not micromanage but to empower people, just as we want to empower children to make decisions and make choices and solve problems too...I have the capacity to think conceptually and frame the needs of the field in a conceptual way and move the knowledge base.

The Boomer Generation of ECE leaders expressed a tremendous tenacity. Not giving up on important ideas, theories or projects. They often took criticism from their peers, which, at times was difficult, but the leadership attribute of being willing to listen and be flexible was learned over time. When one participant was asked how she kept her emotional toughness and esteem when criticized by people highly recognized for the perspectives that they brought to the table, she responded:

Not easily, not easily at all, because it took a toll. There's no question. Just to be honest, it took a huge toll on me personally. On the one hand obviously there are these huge accolades from lots of people. On that one side, there's that. But on the other side, I'm an extremely sensitive person, so I took this personally. Early on, it was so personally directed. I just put myself out there. Then it was harder for people to demonize me, and it was harder for me to demonize them. (Participant TC)

The participants were constantly reflecting on what they believed was essential as seen in this statement,

Most difficult is the perseverance because it's so easy to give up, especially in Early Childhood where things are complicated, money is tight. It's very easy to throw in the towel. I think a real leader is distinguished by somebody that just perseveres. (Participant SO)

When asked how their leadership traits were developed, one participant gave credit to his parents by saying,

"Where was my leadership honed?" I think really it was from my mom and dad. They taught me two things: One, that if you see a problem you should take the initiative and take care of it. So that was one thing, taking initiative. But the other thing they taught me is following through, persistence. You know, if you take on a challenge you've got to follow it through. (Participant SO)

When asked how they would identify someone with the ability to be a leader, several participants mentioned having seen a glint in the eyes and being on fire for learning as ways to pick out a leader. These were also traits that were seen in them early on by mentors. The participants also noted that there are many ways to be a leader. There is not one clear path to leadership and the ECE profession must rely on a variety of styles. Yet, there was something special that could be seen in those with exemplary skills.

The people who lead the charge, they just have something that, you know. A glint in the eyes, a fire of passion for working on behalf of children... When you have that fire in you, it's to share that fire, but that fire comes from learning, from taking things that will really help you, I guess, the thread-line of my career.

Whether you are working in a small business, or running one, to working in the early childhood field--it's how to keep that passion for learning and living alive in all of us. The organizations that are going to succeed are going to do that.

(Participant IC)

The Boomer Generation of ECE leaders were risk takers, willing to try things that they had not done before, and proved their leadership along the way.

The participants have several perspectives regarding the role of leadership. The job of being a leader requires action and, to succeed, one needs to know how to cultivate relationships as stated by this participant (ND),

I think leadership is a process that you're engaged in with other people...I think what leaders do--they try to cultivate a shared vision of a place we're trying to get to, and then, inspire, motivate, engage and respond to people in that process... I think both in the immediate moment and long-term it is really important for leaders to be a really good communicator, a large part of which is being a good listener...I started staying connected nationally with people that I met at that conference. And that sort of led to a pretty strong involvement in speaking out around the worthy wage, to help launch the worthy wage campaign.

Participants gave examples in regard to what leaders should do when placed in the important role of leading others to action. One participant states, "If you're in the field, realize that you're the one who knows the most, right? Don't be hesitant to stand up. You know, use your expertise (Participant IC)." Another participant (DE) shared,

The first is discerning what's right and what's wrong. The second is then acting on the basis of what you believe is right. And the third is being willing to talk about

what you're doing and why you're doing it. And I think as early childhood educators, we're pretty good at the first two, of, you know, discerning what's right, acting on the basis of what's right. But our ability to talk about it and explain it and convince other people, we're not quite as good at that as the other two.

A third participant (TC) stated,

I think they really need to be open to new information, to new learning, and to new knowledge, and that's been something that's really discouraged me about our current leadership, that they just get stuck...I think it's totally important as a leader to continue being current. The people that it's most critical for, are those people who fall in that conceptual leadership category because they're the leaders who influence that next generation--the teacher educators, people who do professional development, the people who are out there in the roles of leadership that others look up to. If they're not current, they influence a whole bunch of people to go in the wrong direction or to get stuck.

According to the participants, the idea of “getting stuck” and heading in the wrong direction occurs when leaders don’t connect with others. Building relationships, networking with others, empowering those with whom you work with and supporting the growth of others were important roles of leaders that were woven throughout the interview data. These characteristics could also be seen in the participants’ on their own journeys.

Burnout and Renewal. Spending years in a particular leadership role or on a special project would often take a toll on a participant’s energy and enthusiasm. One participant noted “you've got to be funny about this or you'll lose your mind.” Pouring

ones whole self into work and, sometimes, being criticized by peers, proved to be taxing and often lead to the participants becoming burnt out.

The thing that was hard for me was that I loved the immediate gratification you get from teaching students. I just really like that. The work at NAEYC, for all it appears as glamorous, you do a whole lot of sitting in front of a computer and not getting any gratification. And you go out and speak once every 3 months, and somebody says, "Oh, that's a good job." In the meantime, they criticize brutally everything you do. It's a hard job, a lot harder than people realize. (Participant TC)

The participants would seek renewal by finding a reason to transition to a new project and let others take over their current project. They consistently said that they had seen peers or mentors who didn't realize when it was time to move on and let others take over, and that was not something they wanted to do. Leaving the ECE field was not of interest to the participants, but transitioning to a new role that continued to build the field and meet their internal need to help children was important.

When I left ... in '04, which was now almost 10 years, I felt that it was the time for me to leave that position. I wasn't really leaving the field. I was leaving the position because I thought there were many leaders who at the time were heading organizations and that we weren't really good role models for how to let an organization go. And whatever happens to it when you let it go, that's what should happen to it. (Participant DE)

As the Baby Boomer ECE leaders begin to age, a growing self-awareness of their limitations emerges. As one participant wistfully said in an interview, "I'm facing the

myth of multi-tasking; I'm not as good at keeping all those balls in the air.” These prominent leaders have found tasks that use to be easy to manage now taking longer to accomplish.

I mean, it's like doing it all. Um, teaching college, consulting, speaking, touring and writing; I'm not doing it in that way anymore. I couldn't sustain--I don't want to--I want to have other things in my life that I can give attention to. (Participant ND)

Traveling and speaking to groups is becoming less fulfilling as these aging Baby Boomers have the ability to pick and choose the projects they wish to work on now. They are becoming pickier about where they will travel or what they will do. They are choosing to only accept opportunities that give them satisfaction since they have to give up personal time.

I don't do very many keynotes at all anymore because I feel like they're--they don't make a very big contribution. They're kind of a one-off thing, and they're not very satisfying. You don't have a relationship with anybody. Whatever glamour is in it, is pretty short-lived...I'm much more likely to make a choice to go work for someone who I know is trying to foster something really similar (to my interests), and they've been trying to get structures in place to keep it (a new project) going. (Participant ND)

In their early careers, long hours, travel and sacrifice were expected and they were willing to do their time because of the sense of fulfillment and influence it gave them. However, as they grow older, they are making different choices.

Power and Influence. The ECE field had a storied history as described in Chapter One. The Silent Generation of ECE leaders were often called “pioneers” and were the ones who started teacher training programs at prestigious universities, developed national systems such as Head Start and began the research that defined the field of child study. The seeds of a child-centered philosophy were planted in the hearts of the study participants as many attended these schools and studied under well-known mentors. The influence of mentors and peer groups on the work and beliefs of the participants provided a critical support throughout their careers.

Barbara Bowman, J.D. Andrews, Lillian Katz, Evelyn Moore... they are a generation ahead of me, but they are part of my peer group in the sense that if we had a problem, we sat down and put our heads together and dealt with it. But I go to them for advice in a different way than I go to my peers. (Participant DE)

Defining one’s peer group happens in many ways. Some by generational identity as noted by the same participant:

It’s interesting about the Boomer Generation because I guess that was one thing I thought about last night, after the interview. I was like, “Okay. Who is in the Boomer generation?” I’d never thought about that identification. Yes, I’m a Boomer. But I think about my peers in the field, and as I call them the people with whom I grew up in the profession, but I don’t tend to think of them as Boomers, but we all are because we grew up together (in the historical period of the 50’s and 60’s).

Peer group identity is also developed based on where one stands on a particular issue.

I found this little pocket of people who were calling into question a lot of things in that (NAEYC) organization...that's where I found sort of the radical caucus, the rebellious people who came to the conference. I said, "Oh, here's my people!"

That's where I found the anti-bias people. (Participant ND)

Common jobs, such as being a childcare center director, working with Head Start or doing policy work would bring like-minded people together, forming peer groups.

We ended up as directors finding each other and forming a little coalition, a consortium if you will. I think it made it possible for all of us to stay in that work (as a childcare center director) for a while. We went on to co-found a larger childcare directors association that was great for about 75 people. (Participant ND)

Peer groups also created loosely linked networks that allowed the Baby Boomer ECE leaders to do what they loved and collaborate. Some networks were formal, such as being on the governing board of the NAEYC as noted by this participant,

I loved being on the NAEYC board. I felt like I was really in the know of everything that was going on, and I was just very excited about the people I was meeting there, the issues we were struggling with. (Participant FH)

And yet another participant stated,

I think a lot of talented women and a few men went through it (Head Start Fellows program) right? For some, it was life changing and for others it just helped create a network. (Participant DE)

Others were loosely linked groups of people who just liked getting together for discussions in order to share ideas.

I think that you begin by networking with people in your community who share the same profession. And if there is a reason for getting together and having workshops or having discussion groups that might be another thing then.

(Participant EE)

Collaborations, conversations on the telephone and correspondence via letters are important vehicles that the Baby Boomer participants used in an era prior to the internet and email. The use of Facebook or Twitter does not serve the same purpose, according to one participant.

The Facebook I don't think it's a substitute for, you know, deep conversations. All our ideas come from us talking to each other, right? That's where ideas come from for all the things we've been doing. (Participant IC)

Peer groups and networking groups provided Baby Boomer ECE leaders opportunities to wield great influence. Serving on a national board, participating in an emerging leaders program, being a validator for the NAEYC accreditation project, working as a Head Start or childcare director allowed the participants to join networks and to collaborate and communicate with others in the field. The study participants belonged to many networks and conducted a variety of important policy and research work within them. Serving on multiple boards or organizations gave the participants the ability to have great influence on their peers and travel across the country visiting networks of friends and peers.

The (business) was for everybody. Pretty early on people could see that we occupied kind of a neutral or a different space than most. I started being invited to be involved with national associations like NACRRA (National Association of Childcare Resource & Referral Agencies). That's when I think the influence

started to go beyond just the subscriber base...I wasn't from that field. I wasn't one of them, but they respected the fact that we had knowledge of what it's like at the grass-roots level. That was really important. I was involved in founding quite a few associations or as a board member on of them. That's when I think our influence started to go beyond just the subscribership. (Participant SO)

The expectations for serving on boards or consortiums required a great deal of travel and networking at conferences, which was seen as doing the time necessary to grow the ECE field as heard in this comment by one participant (SO), "I visit hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of centers all the time. We've pretty well got a finger on the pulse about what the issues are." Traveling was seen as an important mechanism by which to keep connected prior to the age of the internet and web conferencing and not often appreciated by the families of the participants.

I had one kid in college and I had one kid still in high school, and the kind of travel that you have to do, which for me was every single weekend for the 4 years. My children will tell you that I travelled their whole childhood, and I didn't. (Participant FH)

Being a published author was common among all eight participants and it garnered them great influence as they presented their ideas and theories at conferences around the country. One participant (ND) shared this story:

My name became recognized a little bit more nationally. It was recognized by a whole group of people... (Continued conversation about what happened after she had finally published a book). So we developed a little flyer that said, "You might want to learn about this book and come to our book-signing." And we went to all

the sessions that were focused on teacher education or teacher training, and we were handing out these flyers. And I remember so clearly one woman, looked at me and said, "Oh, that's nice," and kind of stashed it in her pile. So, lo and behold, we get to the session that we are doing, and the people were hanging off the rafters. There were so many people, I mean, that couldn't get in or out of the room. We had a little flip-chart paper, and we were holding it around the room...People were sitting on the floor--they were sitting on each other's laps. The room was just jammed. And we were dumbfounded. When we left, we were walking down the hall, and the woman I had handed this flyer to the day before said, "Ah! You're those people! You're more famous than I thought you were!" So that's become our little "funny" word..."Ah! We're more famous than we thought we were!" It was hilarious.

As participants published work, they became nationally recognized and their popularity in the field also grew. They were asked to be keynote speakers or serve on advisory boards of national organizations. As one participant shared, "Between '72 and April '74, I had 52 invitations for presentations to various groups. It was just so many of these things." Becoming an expert in the field allowed them access to those individuals in decision-making roles. Several of the participants mentioned having influence with politicians or serving in advisory capacities to American presidents (i.e., Reagan, Carter, Clinton, Bush and Obama).

I think it was '96, I was invited by the Clinton Administration to the White House for a conference on two—one on brain development and one on childcare—over a few-year period...(later in interview) I was advisor to the transition team for the

Obama Administration. Numbers of us were asked to meet in Washington and talk about what should be done. So many of us talked about the importance of getting in early, and what we meant was “really” early. And still what I see today it gets interpreted mostly as resources going to 4-year-olds. (Participant SM)

With influence, came power, which was given to the participants by other members of the ECE field who widely recognized their leadership skills. For the participants, it was all about building relationships, trusting their mentors and connecting with their peers in order to build a consensus in the larger ECE field about how to do right by children. The participants saw the building of connections in the field as a reciprocal relationship -- the give and take of sharing knowledge and experiences.

The more people I reach out to (and heard their) ideas, the more it enriched my way of thinking, my professionalism, and that's how I think I've been influenced-- not by 2 people but by hundreds and hundreds of people I've talked to, visited, over the years.(Participant SO)

Early in their careers, the study participants spent countless hours at conferences and on the telephone working to solve the big issues of quality, affordability and low wages in childcare, which still plague the field to this day.

Well, in some ways, it's changed enormously, and in some ways, it hasn't changed at all. You know, I can be gone from the everyday meetings, of national organizations, for 2 years or longer. And yet, I can go back and feel like I can pick up the conversation in a heartbeat. You know, it's like telephoning. One of my friends called it in the old days, like putting the needle down on the record just where you had left it. Things had changed, but things hadn't changed. The people

are the same. The issues, the struggles for the tradeoff between quality and affordability and cost--you know, the underpaid field--all of that. You know, the major systemic problems are still there. (Participant FH)

Participants developed close relationships with others professionals over the years as they continued to work for the common good of the ECE field. The NAEYC is the largest professional organization that served the ECE field. It had power and influence over the entire community of ECE professionals and was a landing spot for the participants who were elected to the governing board. Being elected was often based on name recognition, geographical location in the country and how well-known you were by the NAEYC voting membership, which had grown to 100,000 in the late 90s. Leadership positions were given to those whose names were widely recognized.

I was not elected to (NAEYC governing board). No one knows why... (discussion about a name change from marriage), "How come? Everybody knows you. Everybody knows your work." But we just think maybe the name. Most people just didn't recognize the name. So the people who knew, knew, but the people who didn't, just didn't recognize the name. (Participant DE)

Years later, the participant quoted above won a spot on the governing board of the NAEYC as president, but it was only after her hyphenated name garnered recognition. Once seated on the board, it was an eye-opening experience for several of the participants who suddenly saw how this huge professional organization was managed, often with few resources.

When I was early on thrust in a position of leadership, when I didn't even realize I was a leader, people really jumped on the fact that NAEYC, and I representing

NAEYC, was in power. We were the powerful group. For me, that was just an unbelievable shock because, number one, we didn't have any money! (Participant TC)

Many of the participants served on national boards together, growing up as young professionals in a rapidly expanding ECE field. They followed each other's work closely and influenced each other. At the beginning of each interview, many asked "Would it be appropriate to ask you who some of the others are that you're interviewing?" This question was a surprising and unplanned form of member-checking. Throughout the interviews, the participants identified each other as people who had influenced their thinking, were important leaders in the field and were respected peers. By the nature of their own exemplary work, the participants identified and named each other as members of this elite group of leaders -- validating the selection of participants used in the study.

Theme 6- Mentoring

Being Mentored. The role that mentors played in the careers of the study participants was vital to their early leadership development. The mentors saw something in the young participants and gave them opportunities to try out ideas and take on leadership roles. The mentors helped the participants gain new jobs via introductions to influential people and foundations funding ECE work. The participants earned these opportunities with hard work and perseverance as can be seen in this quote, "I was fortunate that there were other people who saw my leadership potential and nurtured it and gave me opportunities putting me in those roles." Often mentors became peers later in the participants' career paths, yet they always held that special nurturing relationship as a role model. "There are differences between your mentors and your peers. The

mentors are still in your life and very active in providing the feedback you need, but your peers take on a different role.” It was clear that being mentored was important to the participants. They talked warmly about their mentors as shared by this participant (TC):

She was fantastic, and she just had me hooked. Like, "Yes, this is what I want to do. And I want to be her." It was one of those, "I want to be that person," because she was just so fantastic, and she just really understood child development. She was just a great instructor, and very highly inspirational and motivating, and very concrete in what she was teaching us, and just everything I wanted to be. That was my role model and mentor.

The mentors were held in high esteem by the participants.

I think having mentors was critically important, people who believed in me, who pushed me, who supported my ideas, who said that I could do it. So I've had wonderful mentors in my life, people who I looked up to and learned from.

(Participant EE)

The participants often mentioned that their experiences with their mentors were extremely important and must be replicated for today's young leaders.

What is it that this generation of leader's needs? They need mentors. They need to know in their path and their journey through this profession that there is somebody out there who absolutely believes in them—a professional, not just a family member, but a professional who whole-heartedly believes in them. And so this mentoring role really is the responsibility of everybody in the field.

Everybody. Everybody. (Participant DE)

The role of mentoring, as important as it was to the study participants, is based on maintaining relationships over years. It included give and take. The mentors provided career opportunities for leadership, and the participants relied on the trusting relationships with their mentors to give honest feedback on an idea or even a personal dilemma. One participant shared what she would say to a new professional:

You need a mentor to get you through this—your career in the field, and you might need several. Don't wait for somebody to come to you and say, 'Oh, I'd like to be your mentor.' You can get a mentor. You can approach someone and start to develop a mentor/mentee relationship.” What does that look like? It looks like asking for help and support, someone that you think really does believe in you. (Participant DE)

Several of the participants responded that they did not do enough to mentor others, which is seen as critical to the life of the early childhood profession.

I personally don't think I mentored enough people. I can look around and see some I did, but I feel like given the opportunities I had that I should have done more of that. I just had no time. I was doing 3 jobs and traveling, and I was just lucky to stay afloat. (Participant TC)

Mentoring Others. Somewhere mid-career the participants found themselves mentoring others by the nature of their work roles. Whether it was as a research project manager, business owner with employees or teaching college, the participants found themselves in the roles of coaches or mentors. “We were now the persons sharing foundational philosophical beliefs with the field. We were the sponge early and now you were moistening the sponge for other people.” However, the participants as ECE leaders

are still actively engaged in work and, as important as mentoring was to them, several of the participants felt that they were not doing enough to support new leaders and did not have the time to dedicate to it as demonstrated by this statement.

I think that many of us, and I could myself among those people, it's kind of like we were just doing heavy lifting because there were so few of us at the time. I personally don't think I mentored enough people. I can look around and see some I did, but I feel like given the opportunities I had that I should have done more of that. I just had no time. I was doing three jobs and traveling, and I was just lucky to stay afloat. (Participant TC)

The participants felt an obligation to share what they had learned along their career paths.

I think we have an obligation as we get older to share our stories as a way of helping them connect to what's going on in their own lives, and that they too can take risks and they too can have opportunities. (Participant EE)

The lessons learned, such as persistence and taking initiative were important enough to share with others.

You know, hopefully the Boomers will demonstrate that when there's a challenge you just have to step forward and take initiative and take it on and to not give up easily but to persevere. Hopefully we can model those sorts of behavior that will inspire others. Well, that's at least what I want to do. (Participant DE)

The participants felt that in order to mentor young professions, it required time to build relationships and a willingness on the part of the mentee to stay connected.

I've learned about mentoring from my mentors—and I have shared this with my mentees and noticed it as well—you think about the mentors taking the lead in the

relationship, but that is not the case. Really good mentoring requires a really active if not equal role, if not almost the dominant role taken by the mentee because you have to energize the mentor. You have to be the one that says, "Okay, I need help here." And check in with them. And I noticed that about my mentees because I have a huge array of potential mentees, but the ones who stick are the ones who are the most aggressive, if you will—the ones who check in with me and who call me to tell me the good stuff, not just when they need help.

(Participant DE)

Taking the time to mentor new leaders and how to go about it in meaningful ways are two conversations currently taking place among the participants' peer groups. The participants discussed how best to find the great young leaders with glints in their eyes -- much like their own stories. Handing off the torch of leadership to a younger generation was not modeled well by the participants' Silent Generation mentors as voiced in this passage.

I mentioned, a big early influence on me (was my mentor), and she told me in the early years of her retirement, "(Participant's name). I think I'm flunking retirement." And I said, "That is one way I don't want you to be my role model, and I'm already pretty bad at it; I'm pretty close to flunking myself, so let's make a pact that we figure this out." I mean, I think it's a traumatic thing for people to retire if they love their work and if you don't have another calling. But I, I do feel in our field it's tricky because it's not like there a bunch of people chomping at the bit to move in and take over. (Participant ND)

Generational differences were identified by participants that are needed to be overcome if the younger generation is to take on the mantle of leadership in the ECE field.

Generational Differences. The participants respected and valued the work of their mentors, but voiced concern about lingering too long in leadership roles and knew that this lingering was not something that they wanted to do. Knowing the right time to transition out of the ECE field is difficult for these still actively engaged in the field.

(name of mentor) has always been a mentor of mine, but I always felt that she is just going to work forever, and I didn't really want to have that (for myself). I didn't want that to be my legacy. But, she comes from a different era. (Participant DE)

Several of the participants discussed the work ethic differences between themselves and their mentors. One of the participants stated that he believes his mentor will "die at his desk." The mentors of the Silent Generation who work hard and still have active careers set an example that the Baby Boomer Generation did not want to repeat.

She was older than I am now, of course...and she was still running around like crazy and travelling like crazy, and that was before she took the job heading up a large public school district in the US. She was still teaching and commuting back and forth to Department of Education after Obama was elected. She was doing all those things in her late 70s. Before that, way back she was asked (by another peer), "Why don't you slow down? Why are you doing all this?" She said, "This is what I have hoped for my entire life that these things would be happening around young children." It's kind of like the payoff of all she's put in, and not personally, but I mean for the field and for children. She is seeing this stuff, and wanting to

contribute to it, be a part of it...She doesn't want to quit now because we have the payoff of everything she'd hoped for and never imagined would happen...I think the Baby Boom generation in general is different, but we've always been entitled to do whatever we want. We're not that hard-working group of (her mentors) generation. We're not the silent generation, whatever they call them. We're not that group. Those people just silently work their butts off. We just kind of been entitled our whole lives, so why should we not be now? (Participant TC)

Definite differences exist between the generations and, yet, the beliefs, philosophies and values learned from their mentors were instilled in the participants' hearts. The crusade to do better for America's children was carried on through the work of the Boomers.

In the 1960s and '70s, a lot of people came to early childhood as a crusade. They were going to change the world through providing better places for America's children...The challenge is now this generation of people who are retiring and (figuring out) how to replace them. I don't think we've really dealt with how to replace that generation because now everything's different and people look at it more as just a job than as a crusade. (Participant SO)

Several of the female participants mentioned that the career choices for women were limited in their early careers, which may be one explanation as to why a void exists in regard to potential leaders following behind them. One participant stated,

In our baby-boom generation, frankly women had fewer options in career fields. We either opted into this or fell into it, like I did. A lot of the people in these later generations of women particularly, had more options, so they went into business or law or whatever (where in the past they might) have been teachers or nurses. In

past generations that was kind of our only options. I think that has in many ways limited the pool of potential leaders in our field to some extent. There was almost a selection process up front that occurred and still does unfortunately because of our salaries. (Participant TC)

In another portion of the interview the same participant noted,

Then we have a lot of these young upcoming people, but we have a gap in between. We don't have the 40 to 50 year olds. That cohort, whatever we call them, that followed the Baby Boomers. They're really shallow (lacking in numbers). I don't know why. I don't know if it's because they were the first group of women who had those opportunities to do other things, and they chose other options. So then the third generation is the children of the Baby Boomers. They're the bright young things I was telling you about. They're upwards in 20s and early 30s, and they are sharp, but they're not quite ready to be our leadership. They're not quite ready to be jumping into those roles.

A concern mirrored by all of the participants was who would take over their leadership positions when they retired. The participants felt that the field was at a critical juncture and that finding new leaders with enough age and experience to take over when they left the field was going to be difficult.

Because of the Baby Boomer retirements, there were so many jobs that were brand new being advertised. They were great jobs that didn't exist, and there was such a small cohort of folks who are qualified for those, who have enough experience. You didn't want to hire a 35-year-old to be the head of a major national organization. I shouldn't be age discriminatory, but you didn't. They just

didn't have the experience. We were looking for somebody who was like 45, who would have this energy to just go nuts. The pool was so shallow. (Participant TC)

The participants shared fears and worries about losing the history of the field that had been laid before them. There was an acknowledgement that, somehow, the Boomers needed to transmit to this history to the next generation of leaders.

I think our generation, really tried to pay attention to, and study good theory. We tried to make ourselves well educated and keep up with research and contribute to it as we could. So I tell young people, "You don't have to do things like we've done it, but it's always important to know the history, of where your work has come from and where your vision is trying to head. So that history is going to be really important. And, I don't think overall as a culture we are very oriented toward knowing our history. So in a field like early childhood where we haven't had a very visible presence overall or been taken very seriously, even knowing that we have a history and acknowledging and bringing that forward is really important. (Participant ND)

Generational differences between the Boomers and those younger than they was also understood from a historical perspective.

So, I'm an optimistic person, but I struggle with despair, to be quite honest, about, obviously about the world, but about our field because I think those of us who are Boomers came into the field at a very different historical time and even economic times. We could live on less money, and we could see ourselves as inventors and, as you were saying, we invented curriculum. We made materials. Having a label about being a professional wasn't as important to us as really doing a good job.

And eventually we came to identify that good job and the way to be taken seriously is to be viewed as a professional. (Participant ND)

The participants saw the younger generation of Millennials as wanting to move up the career ladder quickly and often joked at how often they heard the job of choice was becoming a “consultant.”

The young people I work with all want to be consultants. They just want the flexibility to get in the field, and they don’t necessarily want to do what it took to get the experience. Like someone said, “Well, you need to be an expert in something before you can be a consultant. And to be an expert, you have to have experience.” (Participant DE)

Another participant stated,

I would advise them to really be grounded in our profession. It always makes me smile when people say their goal, a young person especially, "My goal is to be a consultant." You have to be an expert to be a consultant. You have to know what you're talking about, so you need to be grounded in whatever it is you want to consult on. (Participant EE)

This lack interest by younger ECE professionals in “doing the time” in the classroom often frustrated the participants and, yet, they themselves, as mentioned earlier under the theme “Career Challenges and Choices,” often rose to high ranking jobs at young ages.

It's really important to work directly with kids, in order to want to be a leader, and that's not happening. That bothers me. They've skipped that step because they don't either want to take a job for \$400 a month like I did... I also try to emphasize that you really ought to spend some time knowing what it's like to

walk in the shoes of the people who actually do that work and to really know kids.

I think that they could learn that from us because we (Boomers) all did that.

(Participant TC)

The ability of the Millennial Generation to connect with others through technology was seen as both helpful and harmful.

There's no walls. There's no boundaries. There seems to be the ability to meet with people all over the place. It's taken away, if you want to say, some of the barriers of geography, gender, and all of that. So, I think they're more open than maybe it was before. (Participant DE)

The use of social media has opened up new ways to connect with others in the ECE field, but, as one participant commented, "social networking is not really creating relationships," casting doubt about the depth of the professional connections and collaboration to maintain the field. The participants shared concerns about the Millennial Generation's ability to find information free on the internet and no longer saw relevance in the need to join a professional organization like the NAEYC.

Young people don't belong to associations, so it's harder to kind of inspire and connect and get them into the field. I think we've got to figure out some ways to make the field exciting to young people, the new generations. What I've read about the young Millennial is that they really want the work and a job that makes a difference. I think that's a part of their makeup and for childcare would appeal dramatically. They wouldn't want it just as a job because it's nice but because it's making a difference. And I think that would bring out the need to lead.

(Participant SO)

It is clear the participants want to hand over the torch of leadership, but are not sure who to give it too or how to transfer their power and influence. The participants have spent their entire careers inventing and building the ECE field, and feel that it is important to share this history in an effort to maintain relevance throughout the next decades.

So, seek out people who've been in the field a while and get their stories; find out what's influenced them. I think the contribution that you're making with this work is fabulous because I think that those are stories--those are pictures we need to get. And, you know, there's a lot for our generation and how we've conducted ourselves that may not be relevant, but people need to know the history, whether it feels relevant to them or not, I think (they need to know). (Participant ND)

Not wanting to be like their mentors and linger too long at a job, the participants were not ready to retire, but are ready to transition to some other work that has purpose and meaning.

Theme 7- Retirement and Transitions

Thoughts of retirement, transitions and developing a succession plan for business ventures were in the works for a few participants, but, clearly, leaving the field was not something that they were ready to do unless they knew who would carry on the legacy of their work and whether they had something meaningful to go to. They did not want to linger like their mentors, but also did not want to retire without options.

I'll be 72 in a couple weeks, and I'd say for the last--I think from the time I turned 60, I started thinking literally in terms of a succession plan. You know, mentoring people to keep the work going and to take it farther than I can imagine. So, that's been a huge emphasis for the last 10 years for me. I've put some of my own

financial resources, as well as resources of time, into that process. Partly because we have such a desperate need for new leaders. And obviously because I'm hoping that people will carry on the work that I and others have tried to launch...I think it's a traumatic thing for people to retire if they love their work and if you don't have another calling. But I, I do feel in our field it's tricky because it's not like there a bunch of people chomping at the bit to move in and take over. So, so I think it's really hard for those of who might be getting a little tired and want to slow down, to feel like we can step away because really, there isn't a cadre of people knocking at the door saying "As soon as you leave, I'm in there!" That just isn't happening. (Participant ND)

Another participant (EE) shared,

So I'm 71. I have grandchildren. My kids are doing really interesting things. I want to be a part of them. I'm at a stage where I see people around me my age who are not doing well. And I love this profession. I won't be far from it. I'll still be somewhat involved ...but I'd like to just do some other things and go some new places.

One of the selection criteria for choosing the study participants was that they must still be working and involved in the ECE field. The participants seemed reflective about the future and are still writing, presenting keynote addresses and coming up with new thoughts and ideas, in essence, building theories within the field. They are actively mentoring and modeling, and still very engaged in the ECE field through professional and organizational work. In some cases, the participants had retired from one job and,

after a few years, found themselves taking on new leadership roles. One participant was called back into a leadership role to help her mentor transition out of the field.

Yes, and I retired again (from a previous leadership role and became the head of a national organization run by her mentor during an economic downturn). I said, “I will help our beloved executive director make a graceful exit.” And she was worried, of course, about the organization because it was her baby. She founded it, she nurtured it, and so I wanted her to be at ease. So, I promised them I would stabilize the organization financially and that I would find them a new, young leader...So when I left and formally announced my retirement (from this interim job), seated the new CEO; it was clear to me that whatever I did in the future, I was not going to head another organization because we truly must get out of the way for these young folks. (Participant DE)

Retirement for these Boomer ECE leaders is not about fading away, but having the flexibility to spend time with grandchildren, helping out the new business ventures of their own children, sitting on the board of a small preschool in a resort town where one owns a cabin or traveling. Finding the right time to transition out of the field is a question that is on their mind, but, with so many ideas and opportunities available to them, it is difficult for them to decide when it might be the right time to move on as shared by one participant (SO),

We think about it a lot. I guess we wouldn't want to transition out. What we'd like to do is to be less stressed and just really work on the things we really like in a more relaxed timeframe, to spend more time with our grandchildren. I can't see either of us just leaving the field, particularly with the (excitement of the)

international stuff. We really find that enjoyable and rewarding. If we can continue to help people, we'll do it. We'd like to do in a little less than a break-neck pace. We haven't got the magic formula yet.

Another participant stated,

I don't see necessarily running an organization, you know, in my 90s or something. I still see continuing to learn and contribute in the ways that are appropriate as you get older. I would like to not be on the road as much as I am. Things like that. This new book... that I'm doing is going to keep me on the road a lot this year. And I don't want to as much- because I'm looking at the picture of my cute little guy, my little grandbaby, and I missed a weekend with him because of the death in our family last weekend. And that was way too long to be away from him. (Participant FH)

And a third participant (SM) shared,

Up until this year I never ever questioning that I would do anything else but just continue on until I keeled over. And now I still feel that way. I just had hip replacement surgery, and I've been out for a while...I've been away from the office for a month. I think I'm going to have to stay with that question a little bit longer (when asked about retiring). Right now, I would like to continue on and if I can, I will. I think that's the only answer.

Staying connected to the field and finding someone to take over their work is critical and would make transitioning easier for the participants, but there is a wistful sound in the voice of those interviewed about what they would miss.

Well, you know, I keep telling my staff that I'll always be somewhat a part of (name of company), and I will. I'm going to continue, you know, a few days a month to be available and to keep my e-mail address, which is one thing that really connects you. And I would accept keynote addresses. I'll still work internationally because I'm really committed to the work that we're doing in Saudi Arabia, and I want to make sure that that's successful. I'd still go to conferences. What I'm worried about missing...Is feeling, like things are going on without me. It's really hard to let go of being really a big part of what's new that's being developed, but I feel like I have given everything I could possibly give, and I'm eager to try out other things in life. (Participant EE)

According to the participants, the power and influence that they have enjoyed is hard to let go of as they consider retiring and try to figure out what to do next in their lives. As one participant (IC) stated, "I'm 68 years old. I think about it all the time...but I don't have a plan right now." Whatever they choose to do, it must likely be meaningful and fill a need in regard to helping others. Letting go is hard, especially when you've been connected with a field that you helped build. As one participant said,

You know, it's funny to think about it, to think about it personally, right? You know, who's it going to be--you or is there another you. Maybe that's not a good way of thinking about it. I'm, kind of at the stage of my life and career that I don't have it in me to fight the good fight around it all. (Participant IC)

Being proud of the ECE field as it continues on is important to the participants. Keeping that history alive and remembering the role that the participants played in shaping the

field will be critical as young ECE professionals are groomed to take over when the torch of leadership is handed to them.... if and when that happens.

Assertions of Category – Leaders in ECE

Generational identity was influential. Careers born during the historical period of the Civil Rights Movement created a strong and closely knit peer group of Boomer Generation ECE leaders. The culture of American society during the 1960s and 1970 had a strong influence on the values and beliefs that the participants developed regarding their work with young children. A mission-driven passion for doing right by children found the participants seeking job experiences that allowed them to work with the most vulnerable populations of children.

Mentors mattered. Most often born of their university work, the participants had mentors who saw something special in them and opened doors of opportunity for them. Eventually, their mentors became peers, but their peers never became their mentors. Most often, these mentors were of the Silent Generation and were role models who always believed in the participant.

Leaders are born, leadership is nurtured. Something special was identified early on in each of the participants that caused others in the field to take notice. All of the participants were excellent communicators in oral and written forms. They collaborated well with their networks of friends and peers and persevered toward achieving goals and finding answers to theories. They were risk-takers who started businesses, pursued intellectual ideas, led policy campaigns and served on the governing boards of many organizations. Their leadership was nurtured through the opportunities availed to them in a growing field and their influence and power grew from the respected work they did for

the ECE field. The participants worked tirelessly on projects and, sometimes, experienced short-term burnout, but never left the ECE field. The participants just moved on to their next projects.

Networking is necessary. Relationships mattered to the participants. Whether the relationship was with a mentor or group of fellow employees or whether the participant simply wanted to find like-minded people at a conference, they developed extensive networks of people with whom to collaborate. One of the biggest arena's for peer collaboration was the NAEYC. It served as a vehicle to make the voices of individuals known in large and powerful ways, giving the ECE field a voice at the table of many American presidents.

Retirement is a just word, not an action. The Boomer Generation of ECE leaders does not see retirement as the last stage of their work lives. Many have already retired from a job, not just once or twice, but, for one participant, three times. The participants have thought about what to do next, but do not feel a need to stop participating in the work of the ECE field. They will slow down, travel less and play with their grandchildren more, and eventually transition to something else that gives meaning to their lives.

Category - The Field of Early Childhood Education (ECE)

Theme 1-ECE Characteristics

Early in the participants' careers, their Silent Generation mentors had developed laboratory programs and research projects that taught teachers theory regarding how children develop. One participant (FH) stated,

But pretty much all of the original founders (Bank Street), a strong group of women, were there. And the idea was to study how children learn. And once we

had studied it for a long time, then it was to translate that knowledge into teaching.

How to translate the knowledge of child study into classroom application and discovering the implications for pedagogical practice was expanding with the work of these young participants.

In the beginning, there wasn't a whole lot of guidance in what we should be doing, in terms of professional development. There weren't the standards that we have now. In the beginning of Head Start, we had a concept of what Head Start was but didn't have the Head Start program performance standards. We didn't have the outcomes framework. NAEYC hadn't developed Developmentally Appropriate Practice or the Accreditation System. We didn't have CDA in the beginning of my career. (Participant EE)

Leveling the playing field for poor children seemed to get approval as seen with the passage of the Head Start Act, but, for the rest of America, women had been stay-at-home mothers raising competent children for decades. Those children were the Boomers themselves. How could one argue with ones own upbringing?

I think it was Ronald Reagan who said that anybody can take care of young children. Mothers and grandmothers have been doing it for centuries. That kind of thinking, you know, it's not rocket science I think he said. Well, it is rocket science. It is a science and an art, and it's a lot of heart. (Participant EE)

The participants took what they were learning under their mentors' tutelage and put it into pedagogical practice.

Back in the 70s, the focus for a large part was, "We're going to go save these children. We're really going to make this children come alive." And often it was, "Save these children from their parents, bad practices," so the focus was really on the child. And I remember when we put our kids in a childcare center the teachers just had us drop the kids at the door and pick them up at the door--they didn't let us go into the classroom because they didn't want to mess with the magic they were doing. It was just very much a condescending attitude. (Participant SO)

Choosing a career in ECE was not about creating economic stability for your family. The participants believed in the work they were doing and were not in the field for the money.

It was not common or popular for people to say that they chose it as a career because they felt it was a good career move. It's what helped develop them or give them an economic or professional status in the community. It was about our love for children, which is why we in many ways early on took pride in sacrificing our wages because we were doing it for the kids. I think that has changed. I can't point to a particular event, but I just think it is the maturity of the profession. (Participant DE)

The participants were able to carve out financial security partly because they started businesses or wrote books during the 1980s and 1990s, a period of history that saw profound economic growth in America. That is not to say that they went in to the ECE field believing that they would have the professional success they obtained, but, because of their leadership skills, roles and lucrative work came to them.

The two male participants had unique positions in a predominantly female profession. The ECE field was accepting of men participating in the profession and,

although the role of males in ECE is not the focus of this study, the interview responses on the subject are worthy of noting as shared by participant SO,

When I'm playing basketball with some of friends, and I say, "You know, I went to this conference in San Diego, and 95% of the people there were women."

They'd say, "Oh, my gosh, that must be incredibly wonderful." And it occurred to me, I don't even notice. It's just become so much a part of the background that I don't even feel weird about it anymore. So, it's really hardly ever been an issue for me. I just don't even notice it.

With gender equality over the years, little has changed for men entering a predominantly female profession.

There are less men in the field now than there were, percentage-wise, 30 years ago. It's no progress... Well it's the wage thing that everybody says is the big deal. The image is that a man has to work for a certain amount of money and also that it's also viewed as woman's work. Those are two factors that are really hard to overcome. Men seem to have this ego thing about where they work and how much they get paid. That doesn't seem to change much over time. A small factor is I don't think women have been incredibly welcoming of men into the field.

The male participants shared in their interviews that they did make sacrifices -- like giving up restrooms and toilets at conventions!

One of the most pressing disparities in the field was the low wages for ECE professionals working with children, but with the expectation of high quality childcare. The public wanted high quality care, but didn't want to pay for it. It is a source of

tension and continues to plague the field today. Early on in the career of one participant, the startling realization of the wages issue was discussed.

I went to this NAEYC meeting (conference). I'm by myself. And there were so many things that I found appalling. First of all, the idea that you could learn anything by racing to these 1-hour workshops all the time, which is like "WHAT? What is this? How could this be?" So that felt appalling to me. The exhibit hall I thought was immoral. You know, here we had no resources. We were paying our teachers nothing. And there is this wealth in this exhibit hall, and this pushed to be consumers that just I found outrageous and appalling. And then, the idea that, at that point (in time-early 90's), I think there were 20,000 people coming to the conference. I know it is not that now. But the people were sitting on the floor and eating. There wasn't room for people. You know, the whole thing just felt like, "How can we call this a profession under these conditions?" But part of me thought, "Oh maybe it shouldn't be a profession. Maybe it should be a union." I was all confused because I couldn't figure out how we are going to solve these problems (working conditions and low wages) with all these contractions.

(Participant ND)

Meeting the demands of working mothers, childcare programs began to understand the need to be consumer driven. As one participant said, "the field grew because there was more money, there were more chances to look at issues," which meant the quality, cost and affordability, known by the acronym QCA, of childcare was a hot button issue that drew much dialog within the field. At the same time, neurological research was showing the impact of quality experiences on the brain development of babies. It was evident that

quality was important to the healthy development of all children. One participant addressed how the profession named what quality was and looked like.

It (quality early childhood education) requires the best qualified teachers to implement that kind of curriculum. What ends up happening is we have the lowest-paid, least-qualified work force and we ask them to do the hardest kind of teaching, which is emergent curriculum. That's the hardest kind of teaching because you've got to align the early learning standards and the assessments the kids have to do, and then you've got to figure out what to do in between to get them from point A to point C. (Participant TC)

Early childhood research exploded in the 1990s, continuing into the new millennium. Large corporate and family foundations financially supported all types of research on everything from brain development, quality environments, curriculum, assessment, literacy, teacher qualification, childcare availability to public policy initiatives aimed at raising public awareness and support for the growing ECE field. Rating scales were developed to measure classroom environments, the socio-emotional health of infants and teacher-child interactions. Federal, state and local governmental agencies started funding longitudinal studies to measure the effectiveness of Head Start programs and get a handle on how quality early learning experiences affected school readiness. Resource and referral programs became one-stop shops to help parents find quality childcare and train childcare providers in an effort to meet newly developed licensing requirements. Subsidy programs saw federal and state monies grow to support parent education and paying for childcare while parents went to work or attended school.

The ECE profession itself developed position statements and professional standards, and held large professional conferences in an effort to provide a framework for the diverse systems that were sprouting up as money streamed in from various sources. It soon was evident that the education and care in early childhood programs was beginning to lag behind what research was saying was good for young children.

So, there's all this research that is emerging, just fabulous, because people are now taking our field seriously. But the response to what they want to do with it, I think is a mixed bag. (Participant ND)

What the participants had been working for throughout their careers was coming to fruition -- recognition of the importance of the early years. However, with so many diverse voices at the table, many people with little or no background in ECE were making the policy decisions for these newly developed programs and devising accountability expectations to prove successful outcomes for children. Program directors for Head Start, childcare, resource and referral agencies, accreditation projects and licensing systems were now vying for the same pots of local and state money. One participant described her work with a local early childhood council.

I'd been trying to be provocative and challenging because so many of the people who are inventing these accountability systems are so far removed from the actual everyday work of being with children. (Participant ND)

The ECE field became silo'd as pockets of funding each required a different form of accountability. The participants saw a once united field growing with the mission of doing the best for children, now running amuck with both poor quality and high quality

programs at the same funding troughs and a need to clarify what best practices looked like.

When my daughter was looking for childcare in New York City, she's at (Bank Street College) now, but when she was looking at lots of places, she said, "And you devoted your life to this? At the crap I'm looking at?" It was like, "Yeah, well, you know, it's true. You're right." Even within good programs, we still have some really awful things. People weren't ashamed to show it to us, whether they knew my background or not, or it was for a perspective parent. (Participant FH)

The NAEYC responded by creating the Accreditation Project, the Council for Professional Recognition, Developmentally Appropriate Practices and other prominent programs in an effort to straddle the tension that was mounting in the field.

Theme 2- Straddling the Tension

When the ECE field tried to describe itself to the general public, its identity crisis was evident. Policy makers and parents were confused by the many aspects of the growing diversity of the ECE field. What was licensed childcare and how was it different from childcare that held NAEYC accreditation? Does a professional who has a CDA credential have a college degree? What does a quality childcare program look like? Is childcare different than daycare? Is a Head Start program licensed by the state? What does the field call itself: ECE, early care and education, childcare, child development or, the word that made every Boomer ECE professional cringe, daycare? As the NAEYC tried to define many of these questions for both the public and its own membership, research continued to grow exponentially. The professional community was trying to respond to many issues that were surfacing all at once, but the one that seemed most

pressing was the quality of childcare available to parents. As one participant (FH) shared, “They thought that it was evil to have young children in childcare. I thought that it was evil to have young children in bad childcare.”

The conundrum of what ECE leaders and practitioners wanted for the field verses what was realistic given the funding, politics and growing need for childcare was a source of tension. Large corporate childcare chains were opening centers across America with ECE professionals working in the programs. A moral dilemma was noted by one participant (SO),

We have to develop a more sophisticated understanding of economics. You know, supply and demand, and the whole profit motive. At one time, we, sort of the mainstream in early childhood community, looked down on franchise childcare as almost morally irresponsible, kind of moral indignation: “How dare they try to make a profit off kids?”

The for-profit corporate childcare programs were driven by consumer satisfaction. Parents were choosing programs because of cost, availability and reliability. Large centers had plenty of substitute caregivers and, therefore, they wouldn’t close down if the adult was sick, like their in-home family provider would do. These programs were large enough to offer highly sought after infant care, a typically un-profitable venture unless balanced by preschool classrooms. Parents became savvy consumers with checklist on how to search for quality childcare offered from their local resource and referral agency. As one participant noted, this changed the ECE field dramatically. It was now an industry with “childcare workers” instead of teachers.

Over the last 10 or 15 years, the major for-profit players have realized that in order to be profitable, they need to satisfy parents. They need to have quality programs. So, the whole focus has shifted from real estate, back to quality of services, customer service. Most of the chains now pride themselves on having accredited centers, etc., etc. It's been a real shift. (Participant SO)

The powerful childcare industry, loaded with consumers buying slots in programs for their children, had a reputation problem within the ECE field.

Just think about like the milk lobby, trade association. You know, they had those great commercials about where they show people drinking milk and having milk smiles on their faces. You know, those were really effective in making people (think), "Oh, yeah. Milk is a good thing." I think they were very effective in impacting people's attitudes about milk. On the other hand, the Early Childhood people have for decades focused on how bad things are. You know how terrible childcare is and how few people use it, so it's always been a negative message. Instead of getting people excited about it, it almost makes people say, "Oh, boy, I don't have anything to do with that." (Participant SO)

The tension was palpable between the childcare groups and Head Start people at local collaboration meetings.

The separate worlds that Head Start and childcare are in. They don't cross very much. They do separate professional development, separate everything, and they don't think well of each other, until recently, but they haven't all along. I think Head Start, you know, has become a very powerful bureaucratic organization. And you have people in Head Start proudly claiming they're third generation

Head Start. Well, that hasn't solved poverty if you're in the third generation and you're still eligible for Head Start--come on! (Participant ND)

The childcare industry was being giving training and technical assistance through the resource and referral agencies, which received both public and private funding. This period occurred at the same time that Head Start programs were coming under attack for the lack of school readiness they produced in the outcomes for young children. Head Start programs were community-based and in the same neighborhoods as childcare programs. Head Start programs looked different than when the Boomers first worked in these classrooms. Early Head Start worked with infants and toddlers in home-based programs and developed partnerships with community childcare programs. Vying for public monies during the 2000s, a period of economic downturn in America, forced a liaison between these two groups. According to one participant, “the discrepancy between childcare and early education is getting wider instead of narrower.”

Head Start has been off by itself fighting off George Bush and you name it for decades. It's just constantly under attack. It ... always (has) been successful, but they haven't had the support of the entire early childhood community because there's this new partnerships legislation that's providing 500 million dollars for early Head Start programs to work with community programs to improve the quality of infant care. So, I said to them, “Now it's time for you to join up and become leaders in the full community. Get out of your silo or get off your island, and work with the entire community to improve the quality of childcare.”

(Participant SO)

As if the tension in the ECE field between Head Start and childcare was not enough, a new player emerged in the competition for public funding. The pre-kindergarten movement (Pre-K), with a focus on ½ day preschool programs for four-year-olds, was being ignited by research, being done by Boomers, which proved the importance of the early years as a good public investment of resources. This tension often took its toll on the participants trying to keep the field united rather than divided.

Some of this is like a puzzle--how can you get something done. Also, you know, I got beat up about this. I think another contribution I made is to teach people to think you can't go in a straight line. You know, you have to accept pre-K as part of the system because that's going to get you money through a different line.

(Participant IC)

Throughout the interviews, the participants shared their fears in regard to what they felt produced tension in the ECE field. One concern mentioned were assessments being used inappropriately.

And what worries about me about the future is so many things. The accountability movement, the misuse of assessment data to judge teachers, to judge programs without really looking at all of the resources they have available. (Participant EE)

Utilizing a developmentally appropriate curriculum and not losing the play-based approach to teaching was seen as sources of tension for new teachers. Concerns were expressed about the role of higher education in regard to preparing teachers for the compromises they might have to make in classrooms.

(A) tension piece (felt by teachers) themselves in trying to straddle that—teaching kind of what we think is best practice and preparing people for the real world at the same time and figuring out how to do that compromise. (Participant TC)

Another concern expressed by participants was how to prepare ECE leaders to handle the stresses that would be placed on them in the future as the field wielded more power and influence with growing public investments.

There will always be tension, and I think that's a good sign that there is tension, because we have to allow the young voice (to be heard) in order to establish a direction for the work. But we have to get out of the way sometimes to ensure that that young voice has voice, that it's not just (because) we want them to come to meetings, and we'll still keep doing things the way we've always done.

(Participant DE)

The wages and compensation for teachers was a concern early in the careers of the Boomer participants. It is still a concern for the participants, but was lost in the tension of keeping up with other issues that seemed to take priority. The participants thought it was an issue that the NAEYC should seriously grapple with in the near future and is further discussed later in this chapter.

Theme 3- NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children)

There is no question that all of the participants, early in their careers, saw the NAEYC as the standard setter and authoritative group. The participants described their experiences attending the NAEYC national conferences where thousands of people would gather, leaving a profound impression about the work of this professional organization.

So it was '71, I think that, or '72 that I went to my first NAEYC conference, and I had never heard of NAEYC when I was in Mississippi. And that was a profound experience for me. I remember so well. I can even remember what I was wearing that day when I first went there; it's very strange. David Elkind was giving the keynote address at NAEYC. I think it was in Atlanta. And he was such a wonderful speaker. (Participant EE)

And yet another participant stated,

They...the NAEYC board is up on the stage in these big, almost like throne-like chairs. Like, it was just they had at the hotel. They obviously didn't plan that or anything. But it is just kind of symbolically. And then you were out in the aisles, and your name would be called. And you would speak from the microphone, and you had three minutes. And the board members would just nod and say, "Thank you very much." (Participant ND)

And a third participant shared,

I was sitting at the NAEYC conference, national conference, and Barbara Bowman was the president. She got up and announced at the business meeting that they were going to explore the possibility of doing a center endorsement project, a project to recognize the quality of childcare centers. That was what the board had decided to do. It was a shift in the policy of NAEYC they decided to do something that would more directly impact the quality of care for children, and that project became the *NAEYC Accreditation* system. (Participant TC)

As one participant (TC) noted, "The good news/bad news for the NAEYC is that their real relevance is as the authority group, in other words, setting the standards, being the

standard setters.” Yet, being the standard setter can leave people feeling like they are on opposite sides of the profession if they disagree with the direction that the organization is taking.

I understand it, in the early years, there was really an attempt to kind of galvanize a view of what best practices look like and to try to get as much input and shared thinking about that while, um, motivating people to put that in the context of some theoretical concerns and pedagogical concerns. Um, and eventually some concerns about diversity, though I don't think that was initially as much of the leadership thinking. And so, we got ourselves in a bit of trouble. I think developmentally appropriate practice got defined from one particular cultural perspective, um, and didn't get embraced and eventually got rebelled against, once people from a different perspective found their voice around that. (Participant ND)

The study participants were intricately involved in defining the work of the NAEYC, either as members of the governing board, by developing position statements, by organizing public policy campaigns and even by providing the rebel voice in the crowd.

You weren't really the rebels on the outside of the system really. I mean, and that was sort of what we were always trying to straddle even with NAEYC. "Do we get out of this organization, or do we fight within it?" (Participant ND)

The NAEYC knew that it must be the leader in regard to defining quality. The creation of its “Developmentally Appropriate Practices” gave the organization an authoritative voice, but a voice not always agreed with. The participants shared multiple perspectives on how difficult it was to hear peers and colleagues give dissenting opinions.

That was extremely powerful and accepted, very widely embraced. People called it the Bible, and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. It was eminently embraced from '87 until about '91, and then there was a huge backlash against it within the field and beyond. Again, it was a lot of state department people interpreting that it meant that you don't teach kids anything. You just let them play. Then there was a lot of conservative backlash against NAEYC because people thought it was too liberal. It was advocating a progressive education thing. Anyway, there was a lot of backlash. The state of Virginia said you couldn't use the words developmentally appropriate in any early childhood policy. It had a lot of reaction, both positive and negative. Then within the field, it got a lot of criticism in the early '90s because it didn't address curriculum... We made the decision, which was a massively influential and important decision, to say what was both appropriate and inappropriate (regarding practices with children). (Participant TC)

The Boomer Generation of ECE leaders' long held value of collaboration led to much needed revisions to most every document that NAEYC created.

It was not easy being a leader of the NAEYC during its period of rapid membership growth in the 1980s and 1990s. As one participant (FH) said, "In my era, we had incredible leaders." According to another participant (ND), she believed there was "a lot of invisible leadership" going on in the organization behind the auspice of the governing board doing the real work of defining the issues and engaged in policy development.

The mission statement of NAEYC was always focused on children and, yet, it represented the professional field. It called into question the role of a professional organization. Was it focused on children or the professional working with children?

Is NAEYC an organization of professionals or is it an organization whose mission is to make sure children are well educated and cared for? Or is it both? And if so, how do we do both? What do we do if one comes into conflict with the other?"

Because we've always been an organization for children. (Participant DE)

It is a quandary why lately NAEYC has been slowing losing members (Simmons et al., 2014). The study participants shared ideas as to how their beloved organization can stay relevant into the future, but they realize that being the largest organization puts you at risk of making change slowly. As one participant (DE) stated, "I think that we could lumber along like we are with our kind of big tent approach. We do not want to lose anybody who loves children" and, yet, the field is changing, silo'd into different programs. Head Start people attend their own conference, which is different from the conference attended by resource and referral people. One by one, each strand of the profession (e.g., higher education, childcare, researchers) are networking with those individuals who have similar job interests and throwing their own parties as one could say -- their own professional conferences. The NAEYC is still the largest organization in the field, but is struggling to maintain its identity and authority.

The biggest risk for an organization like NAEYC I think is, you can't be all to the field. So then, the other piece...is this proliferation of other organizations, it has to be the collaborator with those organizations. So it just becomes one of many. It just becomes one more voice at the table instead of the one who is convening the

table, and that's a change. When I was there, it was the convener...I'm saying it was the gorilla at 100,000 members...People always looked to it for what does it think and all that. As that changes, the early childhood education voice, again those people who really have worked with kids, still work with kids, are the quality leaders, are the people who would see themselves as natural members of NAEYC, they have a weaker voice in the conversation. In many of us who look around, we say, "This isn't great because the people who are now the leaders of early childhood aren't really childhood educators." (Participant TC)

A second participant noted,

So, I think for me the issue is more building the profession. If we build the profession—I mean we set standards for the delivery of services and build a profession. I think that is how NAEYC will remain relevant. (Participant DE)

How the NAEYC can remain relevant and help young ECE professionals see themselves as part of something larger perplexes the Boomer Generation. The value of the belonging to the NAEYC was never questioned by the study participants and, yet, they worry what it means to the long-term health of the organization when significant drops in membership occur.

NAEYC--and it worries me that, for instance, when I left there we had 100,000 members and now we have 70,000. That really makes me concerned because it's like I told you, my professors said, "You will join these organizations," and I did. I never thought otherwise, and obviously that's not the case anymore. It's not just NAEYC. It's indicative of the broader culture that people don't join national organizations. (Participant TC)

One of the participants believes that it is important to support the younger professional with the technology experiences they have grown use to.

It's a mega dilemma. So many associations struggle with how to get the Millennial to join- they want to just Twitter. I think our organizations have to figure out how to reach people, meet people where they want to be and not try to force them to come to meetings and attend lectures and read books. We need to go to where they're at, in terms of the Internet. We need to figure out how to make Twitter work for us and how to make Facebook work for us. We need to be there. We can't force people to come to us. (Participant SO)

The NAEYC has been important to the careers of the participants, providing them with leadership opportunities throughout their careers. Several of the participants look to the new leadership of the NAEYC with hope and enthusiasm.

I'm so excited about ... the new executive director. I think she is bringing just a whole new, fresh view, and she's very inclusive and interested in hearing from others, and I think that she's really going to lead the organization in an exciting new direction. (Participant EE)

Theme 4-Advocacy & Policy

Early childhood policy work has changed dramatically in the past 42 years. The participants honed their leadership skills over the years by listening, writing, collaborating and using research to present a passionate message about young children to a broad audience. By the nature of their work, they were invited to shape national policy.

In 1971 I was invited to a conference at Airlie House, I think it was in rural Virginia. It was a retreat house where about 150 of us were asked to come for a

week, maybe a week and a half, and develop the materials for what we were thinking would be the role out of the comprehensive childcare act, the bill that had passed both houses of Congress, and eventually at the last minute it was vetoed by President Nixon. (Participant SM)

Igniting the passion of the field mimicked many historical actions used by activist during the Civil Rights Movement such as walkouts and letter writing campaigns as stated by one participant (IC) “When we passed the ABC bill, with no social media, we did ignite a lot of people in the field and in the classroom to write letters and all that.” Another participant (ND) shared,

So we organized that first walk-out. And it was very much in conjunction with families. It wasn't against the families. And, sort of turned our little parade that we did every year into more of a political event and a rally and had the mayor speak at it. And so it was a big, um, you know in a way, it was sort of inside the system.

A third participant (SM) stated,

The bill that was before Congress in '71 had all kinds of things. And it was much stronger than anything that we'd gotten so far. And that bill was used again for the ABC(Act for Better Childcare) bill with George Miller in the '80s...In I think it was '96, I was invited to work the Clinton Administration at the White House ...There was much more (legislative action) then. I really think that it started to get to the general public when Rob Reiner came out with the “I Am Your Child” campaign.

Throughout the careers of the participants, they relied on their network of peers to orchestrate grassroots advocacy efforts surrounding ECE issues at local, state and

national levels. The participants recalled using calling trees, postcard campaigns, stuffed dolls for advocacy gimmicks to capture the public's interest in children and families. The participants who lived and worked in Washington, D.C. played key roles in representing the ECE field. They could run to the Capitol Building for a hearing or make a meeting with a legislative aide at a moment's notice.

I'd always grown up in Washington, so I always had this--I don't know how to describe it--it's sort of like policy is happening in a way that you've assumed. It's not like people from the outside who think, "Oh well now I have to go work in policy." It's kind of like the border between it and life. It's much more blurred...I never understood that I was doing policy work. It was just the work. (Participant TC)

Working with the support of the large membership pool of the NAEYC behind them, it only took one phone call to start a grassroots advocacy system that would connect an ECE professional who knew the correct message with a legislator at his home office that same day. As one participant (IC) said, "the thing about this job and this kind of work is the country is your neighborhood." State advocates were identified in all 50 states. The NAEYC's office was in Washington, D.C. along with the Children's Defense Fund, which led much of the early childhood policy work until the NAEYC hired a policy person in the late 1990s.

Several of the participants noted concern that the people in Washington, D.C. working on policy issues were not necessarily true ECE people doing the everyday work of teaching children. As noted by one participant (SO) "People advocate for policies that they think are good for the field, but they don't quite see that the field doesn't agree with

them.” This statement was an example of the tension between those making policies for the field of ECE, and those doing the actual work. Yet, it was clear that the work of policy development took a particular type of leadership skill noted by one participant (IC) that “in a lot of cases, the personality of an early childhood teacher is not the personality of an advocate.” The tension of being in the field and speaking with an authoritative voice from the perspective of “doing the time” in a classroom working with young children was highly valued by the participants.

There was a tension at times between the policy groups and the professional organizations as they were not always working from the same page. The policy leaders knew that getting money to the field was critical and, yet, with additional funding, the field still struggled with poor quality childcare and low teacher compensation as noted by one participant,

Yeah, so in the advocate's mind any money is good. We shouldn't look a gift horse in the mouth. More money is better, but not necessarily. If it is administered poorly, it could really wreak havoc. (Participant SO)

Getting money to the ECE field was not only difficult, but defined how the field was organized.

It isn't just follow the cash. The cash helped create a field, right? You know, there was more to be involved in. There were, you know, all these people working on early childhood, right? Head Start has been around since 1965. (Participant IC)

Policy development could not be completed by one group, such as the NAEYC, alone. It took many partners to move public opinion to see the value in funding programs for young children. The participants worked hard to create partnerships with unlikely allies.

Understanding you needed unusual partners that you couldn't do this alone. I'm proudest of getting money for lots of kids and families. I mean, I sort of get driven myself, driven by the game (Policy development). (Participant IC)

Each of the participants completed advocacy work for a variety of early childhood issues: Head Start, childcare, infant/toddler care, teacher compensation and professional development, families, quality, subsidies for poor families, licensing, and assessment. A concern for the future is as one participant (TC) states "the authentic voice of the teacher is not being carried through for some reason. What has gone on for teachers to not see themselves as people who can lead in policy work also?" This concern leads us back to our examination of what in the careers of the participants has allowed them to become great advocates.

Theme 5-Publishing and Training

Sharing information and imparting knowledge was satisfying for several of the participants who had opportunities to teach other professionals. Several of the participants were college professors at one point in their careers and a few others developed and presented training materials to the general childcare industry.

I developed training. I used a mimeograph machine to create these handouts. So really I have a collection of handouts that's about 3 inches thick over the 3 years that I did this. I created all these handouts--songs to sing, art activities, how to do science, how to read stories--everything that I could think of, putting into these handouts that I would use in workshops with the teachers and help them to learn how to do these practices. (Participant EE)

All of the participants were published authors. Some wrote technical reports, others wrote books and still others wrote journal and magazine articles. Writing a book was often a taxing experience, but very rewarding.

I decided to write a textbook. It was going to be my own work. ...So I decided that the big problem in the field is teacher preparation. We knew so much more than we'd ever known before, and we just weren't sufficiently current. We really needed to be more evidence-based and research-based. I decided I wanted to write a book that reflected that. (Participant TC)

Another participant shared this insight,

"I don't know how to write. I'm not an author." So she (a publisher) said, "Well, let me introduce you to the people here." And they said, "Well, actually we have been following your writing in Childcare Exchange, and we are just starting to publish our own books. And one of the things we wanted our first books to be on is how you train teachers." And, so you know, I never sought out to be an author but I am now. (Participant ND)

And a third participant stated,

And physically it's getting harder. I had a burn-out after I finished the book, and I'm still kind of reverberating from it. I put too much pressure on me. I have to kind of do mindful living in order to heal. But it's for the young people coming in. What an opportunity. We know so much now about how good it can be.

(Participant SM)

After publishing a book, each participant went through a period of burnt out. This was followed by a period of renewal.

The powerful use of images, as teaching tools was mentioned often by participants as a way to demonstrate best practices. The participants often said that a person can talk all day about what makes good practice in regard to working with young children, but, unless you saw it, it wouldn't make sense.

You know, I'm not a filmmaker. I don't have a camera. I don't even know what I'm doing, but I just feel like this stuff has to be documented. I was sort of interested in that whole video work, even more than writing to tell you the truth, because I think those images of what people are doing can be really powerful for learning. (Participant ND)

The participants found many ways to show best practices using visual means, including setting up demonstrations at schools, leading large experiential workshops and capturing practices in photos, video or live TV.

You could say individualize and it could mean something different in a group...I mean, I know that from trying to write for (Bank Street) for a number of years, trying to communicate its philosophy. And so I made 17 filmstrips, and they've lasted for a lot longer than one would think of filmstrips that were made in the '60s and '70s. (Participant FH)

Another participant shared how she bartered for her first video's to be produced.

Well, it's used internationally still...made in, I don't know, the early '90s or late '80s or something. But because she was a TV producer (and a parent at the center)--she moonlighted this project instead of paying childcare fees she could not afford as a single mother. She even took music that was copyrighted. I sent it to Jim Greenman and said, "Jim, is there anything I missed in here that you think

should be added?" I said, "This is this little in-house thing," and he said, "Oh, for goodness sake! I have made two videos, and they're not nearly as good as this. I want to use this for our...." So, we had to go back and buy out the copyright for the music and all this stuff because she had just put this together in her little moonlight thing--it was so funny. (Participant ND)

Another participant felt the impact of video on the field of ECE would be trend setting.

I very optimistically and naively said, "Sure. I think what we need to do is develop a series of videos which capture both how care should be given but also how to interact with children and also child development information and make these available, almost like to a pizza-delivery arrangement, to childcare providers and family care workers and resource and referral agencies." (Participant SM)

A second participant shared a similar story,

We did this project where we taught a satellite television distance learning course. We did it for 4 years. We developed it from the ground up. It was a live TV broadcast, and at one point, we had 10,000 students all over the country who were doing it. Some got credit for it, and that was probably the most fun I had in my entire life. Every week we did it for 4 years, and we did 8-week terms--it might have been longer than that--it might have been a whole semester's worth. I was teaching again. And what was so cool was that we had live call-ins, and literally live callers. We would show a video and then they'd have a 2-minute break where they were supposed to discuss in their site, and then we'd take calls. That was always an adventure, to take live call-ins with thousands of people watching, what you're going to say and answer to that. (Participant TC)

With today's ability to self-publish the educational industry is filled with a proliferation of what one participant called "curriculum cookbooks," activity books filled with how to recipes for creating curriculum activities, which "are not as popular with anybody who knows the least bit about how children learn". Participant's expressed concern that what is available for purchase is not always high quality or demonstrates the best pedagogy. The participants prided themselves on presenting material that was based on research and sound practices.

Everybody who has developed these materials with me we're all connected to the field. We're part of the field. We're from the field. We've been teachers. We've been directors. We've been Ed coordinators. We know exactly what people are dealing with, and we don't want to sell you books; we want to be there with you.

(Participant EE)

Transferring knowledge is important to the Baby Boomer participants, but they question some of the ways in which the ECE field is providing training as stated by one participant (SM), "The thing that I see now though is that the way we're using media--these deadly "webinars". I mean, you would think that we'd find a better way to transfer the information." The power of seeing best practices and reading the current science was a witness foundational to the publishing work of the participants.

Theme 6- Future of the Field

The study participants were privy to a period in the ECE field's history when great change and growth was taking place. The participants were the co-creators of the ECE profession as it stands today. They are the leaders who helped frame much of the

research, pedagogical practice and policy development that has laid a foundation for the future leaders of the field.

We know so much more now than we did certainly when I entered the profession.

We have research to back up what we know. We have just a wealth of resources, some better than others, people can take advantage of. (Participant EE)

Another participant stated,

The field is much bigger than when I came into it. So there are many more opportunities. It's enticing in a way. I do think that they're looking at it with a totally different language than we did. The jobs that we (Boomer Generation ECE leaders) are in are now opening up because so many of us are retiring. That level of jobs is opening up. Then there's a whole bunch of jobs that just didn't exist.

(Participant TC)

Recent public support for the field of ECE has been seen in both positive and negative lights by the participants. On the one hand, the early years were finally getting recognition as being critically important to developing positive child outcome. On the other hand, they wonder whether we can truly provide what we have promised -- quality care and education. One participant gave the analogy that the emperor has no clothes!

The workforce we have is inadequate to deliver the quality that we're promising people. We're getting public recognition, we're getting money for preschool, and yet we don't have the qualified people to deliver the quality that will result in the outcome. So, the emperor has no clothes, and it's because we're not investing where it makes the actual difference in the child outcome. That to me is the biggest concern. It worries me. (Participant DE)

Workforce. Supporting the professionalism of the workforce and raising compensation were two issues seen as critical for the future of the ECE field. Several of the participants noted how diverse the workforce had become -- almost creating an identity crisis of knowing who sees themselves as working in the field. They also mentioned a dwindling workforce with the appropriate teacher qualifications as an issue.

I would also say the diversity of the types of work people are doing. It's exciting, but at the same time it becomes harder to define how you begin to support the workforce when it looks very different than it did 40 years ago. (Participant DE)

Another participant stated,

I think we're going to have a huge shortage of teachers who see themselves as professionals and who stay in the field long-term. I think so much of where things are headed is beating teachers down. It's sucking the life out of them and sucking the heart out of what they want to do with their work. (Participant ND)

The workforce is seen as unstable and many unqualified people without understanding the role of professionalism as noted by this participant (DE),

The professionalization of the workforce will stabilize at some point and then we'll (have to focus on) a foundational piece-our college teaching... We don't encourage people to discover who they are and what they want to bring to the teaching-learning process.

A second participant shared,

Now we have incredible data to support it, and there's no money and there's no recognition that we have to pay people in order to get a different workforce. The massive determinate is that teacher. We have made virtually no progress in

childcare...I could just go on and on about it. I haven't even mentioned the fact that the discrepancy between childcare and early education is getting wider instead of narrower. (Participant TC)

The participants identified the gap between childcare and early education as growing and see a need for a campaign to stabilize wages as foundational for leading the field in the future.

I think there is a growing consciousness around what needs to be done around policy, and particularly workforce stability. We know that there is a huge turnover. We know that it is low wages that force turnover in personnel. Those things are connected of course...and yet we haven't really gotten a handle on how to manage the issue. (Participant ND)

Wages and Compensation. When asked what they believed to be a critical issue that the field faces in the future, the participants overwhelmingly mentioned the need to focus on the profession regarding wages and compensation. For most of their careers, the ECE professional work focused on what was best for children. Many stated that it is now time to tackle wages and compensation for the professional field.

I think for me the issue is more building the profession. If we build the profession—I mean...set standards for the delivery of services and build a profession, I think that is how NAEYC will remain relevant. (Participant DE)

Efforts to raise wages had been difficult with childcare income primarily based on parent fees. One participant gave an example of how the field must address childcare issues and raise educational requirements if we are to see change.

I haven't found a strong funding base that gets you to higher wages. And that's one of the challenges for the wages campaign. And it wasn't always tied to credentials. You know, if you're going to demand worthy wages, you have to demand credentials and competence. (Participant IC)

When the participants were asked what can be learned from their career paths, most mentioned perseverance and the relying on the support of friends and allies to keep you positive because change does not happen quickly and can easily make one feel defeated.

Stick to your guns. You don't have to worry about being the only one because if you really get out there, you'll find that there are other people who believe what you believe. It's about community organizing. I think that's probably the most important thing they can learn from the Boomer Generation, is there are some things that are worth fighting for, and get on out there and fight the good fight. Find your allies, and stick to your guns, and just keep right on going. (Participant DE)

The participants also mentioned that for the future of the ECE field, the professionals need mentors from within the field.

They need mentors... They need to know in their path and their journey through this profession that there is somebody out there who absolutely believes in them—a professional, not just a family member. And so this mentoring role really is the responsibility of everybody in the field. Everybody! So, how we communicate that, I think is a challenge. (Participant DE)

The participants demonstrated throughout their careers that they are life-long learners. They also suggested that this trait is important to pass along to the next generation.

When you have that fire in you, it's to share that fire, but that fire comes from learning, from taking things that will really help you--it's the fire in their eyes that has been, I guess, the thread-line of my career. It's how to keep the fire in our eyes, whether we're working in a corporation--we didn't talk about that whole side of my life--or working in a small business, or running one, to working in the early childhood field--it's how to keep that passion for learning and living alive in all of us. And the organizations that are going to succeed are going to do that.

(Participant FH)

The participants shared several ideas on how to keep the NAEYC relevant into the future. This beloved professional organization is a source of concern as membership numbers are dropping. Several insights were shared about how to capture the interest of the young generation of professionals.

NAEYC has to say, "How do we mobilize a field that feels as though (their not a profession), what's the value in mobilizing as a group?" It's not even mobilizing. It's what does NAEYC has to offer them in order to get them there to mobilize?

(Participant IC)

As one participant (IC) mentioned, it is time for the NAEYC to “jump on the bandwagon of public interest” even if it is not a perfect road.

The thing that concerns me is that there doesn't seem to be much interest in childcare. What excites me is that early learning is now becoming important. Policy makers get it, right? Everyone's talking about it. It's really changed, this

idea of insuring kids have a strong start. It's taken off. That's only to the good about getting more resources in moving this system forward. It is a really interesting time. The field has to jump on the bandwagon. It may not be perfect, but a lot of people are talking about early learning.

As one participant commented from a perspective of being in the career for many years and knowing change is slow and money not easy to come by said:

I have a hunch that all this new legislation, all this new talk, will just result in incremental changes. Money will still be divided into 80,000 pockets, and programs will still be dealing with all sorts of regulations from all sorts of directions. I think there will be small changes, maybe the amount of the funding will increase somewhat and so salaries may go up, but we've been through so many things where it seemed like the whole world was changing but yet our field ended up staying about the same. I think any changes that happen in the next 5 years are going to be surprisingly incremental. (Participant SO)

Change might be slow, but the persistent ECE Boomers are no stranger to slow and steady movement. It has kept them engaged throughout their careers and can provide insight into the future direction of the ECE field.

Assertions of Category- Field of ECE

Identity crisis. Who is inside and outside the field of ECE? Some of the participants didn't see themselves as part of the early childhood field and, yet, their impact on the field has been enormous. Some of the participants knew that they were "inside" the field and proudly wore the badge of a teacher, having done time in a classroom. Others were "outside" looking in from the perspective of a researcher, policy

analyst or member of the radical caucus that saw the NAEYC as being too big to understand their constituents' issues. Other had a neutral position, having done time in childcare and supported the ECE field with business resources. Whatever the work, concern was mentioned regarding how to support a diverse workforce where you will find yourself with more meetings and tables to sit at.

NAEYC -- time to gather the herd. Due to the diverse nature of the field at the present time, finding a reason for the younger generation to join a professional organization is seen as critical. When information is easily garnered without a cost, what is the value to the individual to join NAEYC or any other organization? Without membership growth, or helping new professionals to see the value of having a collective voice at a time that public interest is growing, could put the childcare industry at risk. It is time for NAEYC to gather the herd and set the course for the entire ECE field.

Game show politics. Following the money streams to fill the silos has produced competition among ECE allies. Public and private dollars will grow ECE programs, but sustaining them with soft money is difficult. Concern was expressed by some of the participants that accepting someone's money might cause you to lose the game and yourself(professional identity) in the end. Other participants said that following the funding streams and tapping into funding is the only way to grow the industry and the ECE field must jump onto the bandwagon instead of being conservative and losing the game by waiting too long to play.

Winning the race. The participants saw decades of messaging about the importance of the early years as learning years, finally yielding results they had been hoping for many years. Public interest in pre-kindergarten programs is at a tipping point.

Parents are becoming savvy consumers, seeking high quality childcare programs. The work of early childhood advocates is now crossing party lines with politicians on both sides of the aisle in an effort to improve child outcomes.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine how the career paths of eight exemplary Baby Boomer generation early childhood education (ECE) professionals evolved over time to support their leadership roles in research, pedagogy, and policy development. Each participant is a member of the Baby Boomer Generation born between 1946 to 1964, or on the cusp, the years just prior to 1946. Of the eight participants, six were female and two were male. Each participant is a published author, sought after keynote speaker and has played active roles in all three areas of research, pedagogy and policy development.

Data was obtained by using a two-stage interviewing process. Interviews were recorded using the phone with a digital recorder attached to the phone, or using Skype and the Athtek recording software on the researchers' computer. Each interview lasted between 50-85 minutes and had a minimum of two days between each conversation. The interviews were focused on answering the original research question and two sub-questions with descriptive information on participant's background obtained at the beginning of the first interview. An interview protocol guide was used to keep dialog focused, and provided the researcher with prompts if needed.

A phenomenological methodology was employed by the researcher to analyze data obtained through the interview process. Each interview was transcribed using an

unrestricted open coding process by which themes, definitions and examples were compiled as seen in Appendix E and F.

A second coder was used to independently review the transcripts and discuss preliminary themes. The NVivo10 computer program was used to recode the transcripts into themes, organized under tree nodes as seen in Appendix G. Journal and memo notes were added relating to participants feelings, lived experiences seen as valuable background information. The data was organized into two categories: “Leaders in ECE” and “the Field of ECE”. Chapter four reported the findings for each of the two category and supporting themes and sub-themes. Assertions were developed for each category and discussed in summarizing statements.

Category- Leaders in ECE

Leadership, leader, leading all have the same root word- lead. The research on leadership development is wide spread among many disciplines. There is little consensus on what is a common definition of leadership, and how it can be applied to affective practice (Rosch & Kusel, 2010). The words to describe the attributes of leaders are a laundry list of adjectives that one could pick depending on the work setting and actions needed. Sullivan (2010) believes that leadership abilities develop over time, as a lifetime process that begins at birth. The integration of all our experiences gives us what is needed to take on the next leadership tasks, from which we learn and add this new knowledge to our understanding of self. This thought mirrors the early childhood beliefs rooted in Piagetian child study of experiential learning within a life-span developmental frame. Julie Biddle (2012) who writes about leadership in early childhood programs identifies “the concept (leadership) is defined differently depending upon the historical moment.

The term “leadership” is used throughout the scholarly literature, but not well defined (pg.12). It is clear that in the ECE field, the historical period of the Civil Rights Movement helped develop beliefs and core values in the study participants. Starting ones career in ECE during the 60’s, when Head Start was birthed and the nation began a path of supporting poor children’s school readiness, incited a passion and sense of mission-driven purpose for working with young children in the participants. The participants were motivated to do research and policy development that propelled them to positions of power and influence. Participants frequently mentioned how their experiences and knowledge obtained from a position, was used as a stepping stone to the next career move. Learning beset learning. Leadership skills were honed throughout an entire career.

The participants did not aspire to be a leader, and yet others saw something in them. Glints in the eyes, persistence, risk-taking, good communication skills, were just a few of the characteristics described by the participants. These attributes propelled them to positions of responsibility and career opportunities where their leadership skills were finely tuned. This would support the idea of Trait Theory as critical to leadership development (Clark, 2014). Trait theory implies that individuals possess certain attributes that contributed to their success. These attributes include beliefs and values as components of the leadership characteristics one calls upon when influencing others to follows (Clark, 2014). Participants possessed intrinsic traits that suited their leadership style and directly had an impact on their ability to motivate others to follow their lead.

Sullivan (2010, pg. 57) identifies values as the “beliefs, principles, and ideals that influence leaders and followers.” The values are what leaders bring to the table in shared

leadership. This is important if we used the conceptual framework for this study, the adaptive leadership model, to understand how the ECE field must change and grow young leaders in the future. Each of the study participants had a keen self-awareness of the gifts and skills they possessed, and often would not take on a job or career move that was not suited to their interest and abilities. As an example, two study participants were asked to interview for the job of president at a university, not really sure if the role would suit them, they proceeded forward with the interview process but ultimately were not offered the jobs. Each reflected it was not a good fit from the onset, but wanted to go through the process to see if others thought it might work out. Sullivan (2010, pg.60) identifies vision as the ability to “think long-term and imagine what lies ahead” as an important attribute of good leaders. The study participants were constantly re-inventing ideas, projects and research to keep the field relevant and growing. They each possessed the ability to vision for the field beyond where it was at the moment, and orchestrate systems building to achieve the vision.

Only two of the participants identified themselves as researchers, and yet all did research in their professional roles. Surveying state agencies, doing action research in the classroom, collaborating with colleagues developing theories on topics such as infant attachment, or cultural connectedness, piloting projects, each of the participants utilized research methodologies throughout their careers. This ability to discover, answer questions, design and develop a research project is a critical skill of early childhood leaders(Rodd, 2011). Understanding the importance of research as giving the field of ECE credibility is critical, and practiced often by the participants.

Research, especially action research, is considered to be one of the most effective ways to optimize the care and education of young children, as well as improve the professional image of the field. (Rodd, 2011, p.199)

The role that mentors played in presenting opportunities for professional development was critical to their career paths. As mentioned previously, mentors became peers, but peers were not mentors. But both peers and mentors had relationships with the participants. It was all about the relationship. Participants fondly talk about their mentors and peer networks, one participant called it “my gang- my peers”. Study participants were collaborative and worked together to develop programs, businesses and systems. The business owner participants had partners in their work. The researchers co-authors books. They valued the ideas others brought to the table, not always agreeing, but agreeing to disagree. In the book *Learning from the Bumps in the Road Insights from Early Childhood Leaders* (Brunno, Gonzalez-Mena, Hernandez, & Sullivan, 2013) the authors fondly modeled collaboration as they respond to one another’s thoughts on various chapters. Honoring relationships with trust and respect is seen as critical to taking responsibility for the greater good of the whole ECE community. Study participants relied on mentors and networks of colleagues to provide the honest feedback that can only come with trust. This type of give and take between participants and others in the ECE field is critical to the adaptive leadership process necessary as change is required for the ECE field to stay relevant into the future.

The selection of participants for the study was reliant upon being of the Baby Boomer Generation or on the cusp, and still actively working. As a society we hear much about the retirement of this generation and how it will drain social security, leave gaps in

our employment landscape and change the political face of America. Expressed earlier in chapters one and two, discussion is building in the ECE field as to who will take over positions of leadership when the Boomers retire. As reported in the finding of this study, participants don't plan to leave the field anytime soon. They see a slow transition out, yet still want to keep a toe in the water of the ECE field. Slow down, yes. Travel less, yes. Leave the field and jobs they love, not anytime soon. This finding fits with the statement made by Nancy Schlossberg in an interview (O'Brien, 2014) "Boomers don't retire- they just change gears." Participants are engaged in succession plans for transferring leadership, but not with any haste. They would like to transition to other types of meaningful work. This course of action is also mirrored in the work of Dr. Ken Dychtwald (2014) in the *New Retirement Survey* where he announces that "the midlife crisis is over: middlescense has begun". The good news for the ECE field is we will not lose these exemplary Baby Boomer leaders anytime soon. They are just looking for the next more flexible types of tasks to take on. The Boomers also realize they have an obligation to mentor others but haven't found much time in their busy lives to follow up with idea.

Category- The Field of Early Childhood Education (ECE)

An identity crisis has emerged within the ECE profession. NAEYC, the largest professional organization is bleeding members (Simmons, White, Sheehan, & McCain, 2014) as reported in the latest trend report to the governing board. NAEYC is identifying strategies to retain and grow membership rolls at the affiliate level (Simmons, 2011). Participants are concerned how to reach new professionals who are seeking value for the dwindling dollar, and don't seem interested in joining a professional organization.

The Baby Boomer generation of ECE professionals joined organizations because they understood the power of the collective voice, and their mentors told them it would be a good thing to do. In the early period of the participant's careers, there were few options for membership in professional organizations that represented the ECE field specifically. Besides, NAEYC was "the gorilla" as one participant mentioned.

The value of joining an organization seems lost on the tech savvy Gen Xers and Millennial's who are privy to, as one participant said "a blinding amount of technical information available free online". These younger professionals are searching out "curriculum cookbooks" and the "deadly webinar" free training opportunities that provide a network of colleagues on wikispaces and blogspots. As Debra Sullivan said "Technology changes culture"(Brunno, Gonzalez-Mena, Hernandez, & Sullivan, 2013. P. 95). ECE professionals who are Generation Xers rarely stay at the same place of employment for more than five years (Rodriguez, Green, & Ree, 2003). What is a professional organization to do when the field is becoming diverse and mobile? It is a struggle for NAEYC with recommendations made later in the chapter.

With public support growing for the Strong Start for America's Children Act of 2013 H.R. 3461(Committee on Education and the Workforce, 2014) more diverse allies are working with ECE professionals to implement programs that will improve child outcomes. This is seen by participants as a really good thing for the children, but creates tension within the field about what strings might be tied to funding, and who makes decisions that might run counter to the long held ethical beliefs (NAEYC, 2011) of the ECE profession. Participants mentioned assessment, teacher credentialing, raising the quality of childcare and infant mental health as critical for the ECE field to address. The

biggest concern supported by the findings of the study, was the longstanding quiet issue of worthy wages as central to the future work of the ECE field. The decades old work of supporting worthy wages was seen as a critical rallying point and recently taken up by the NAEYC governing board (Education Week, 2014). In in her book *Early Childhood Education For a New Era Leading for our Profession*, Stacy Goffin (2013)call upon the ECE field to respond to the issue of professional competence “regardless of sponsorship or funding distinctions’ between program settings” (p.5). This supports the notions presented by the participants that is now time for NAEYC to focus on the professionalism of the ECE field and address wage compensation.

Implications of the Study

It always is satisfying to see research questions answered definitively. In the case of this study, a few surprises were mixed with expected results. The researcher worked hard keeping an open mind as to what might surface in the findings. The research questions started as ideas doodled on the sides of notes taken in doctoral classes. Conversations with Baby Boomer Generation colleagues from diverse caregiving professions such as nursing, social work, aging services led to-what, why and how we might engage young professionals into leadership roles when retirement age blankets the each field. This study was satisfying. Who would not enjoy interviewing the amazing leaders of ones field of study? But alas, the study continues to pose more questions and leads to an interest in recreating the work with the younger generation of ECE professionals. If a person could look into the future, what would the ECE field look like? Baby Boomer Genration ECE professionals indicate they want to know the legacy they have been part of will last beyond tomorrow, a legacy of leadership born of a historical

period of time. As it is, we examine the past to inform our future. After all, hindsight is a gift. The overarching research question was:

How did the career paths of the boomer generation of early childhood professionals evolve over time to support their leadership roles in research, pedagogy, and policy development?

These young adults grew up in an important historical era that included the Civil Rights Movement, Women's Right's era, and Vietnam War which proved to be pivotal life experiences that helped formulate philosophical beliefs about what was best for children. Boomers developed a passion for addressing social justice and cultural issues that led to a mission-driven need to working with the poor and do what is right for children.

The participants had leadership attributes born and nurtured over time. They were excellent communicators, listeners, writers, and weren't afraid when they saw a need to respond. Participants were risk-takers who took initiative to move a policy agenda towards a growing profession. Participants were persistent and passionate about the mission of helping young children, becoming theory builders and visionary's seeing a path to excellence.

Mentors who saw something in them at a young age, believed in and encouraged them to step up to the plate and take a chance, opened doors for jobs and positions of responsibility, and modeled an enthusiasm for lifelong learning. These relationships with mentors are fondly remembered by the participants.

Decades in the ECE field created networks of peer groups that were collaborative and provided a platform for respectful conversation on common ideas that eventually developed into position statements, policy campaigns and programs. Peer groups

developed power and influence as the field was growing. NAEYC was the organization leading the work and the convener of the table to sort through ideas.

As contemporary ECE leaders emerge, how will the boomer generation of ECE leaders confidently transition out of the field?

The surprising answer is they do not retire, in the traditional sense. Participants will transition to other meaningful work to continue their feelings of passion and mission to do better for children and seek social justice for all. They will continue to give keynote speeches, write and publish, travel, be active grandparents, and find new start-up programs that could use their gifts. They do not want to be like their mentors who will die doing the work, but they will not leave until they find someone to step in and take over. They have both fear and excitement about the future of the field:

- Fear that not enough people are “doing the time” in classrooms needed to bring the authentic voice of professionals working with children to the table.
- Fear that we are promising the public something we can’t deliver uniformly and that quality is pocketed around the US and the world because of wage and education disparity in the field.
- Fear we do not have enough voice at the funding and policy table when it comes to what is fundamentally good for children. As an example, assessment/high stakes testing is out-of-control and participants worry that the teacher voices are being lost in the policy rhetoric.
- Excited that so much knowledge and research is emerging and available.

- Excited to see the diversity of jobs and career paths available to move up or around within the field for new professionals- opportunities never available to them.
- Excited to garner public support for early learning like never before. It took many long years to see it come to fruition.

How will the boomer generation transfer the knowledge and leadership to those new leaders in order to bridge the generational divide and maintain the legacy of lessons learned over the past 42 years of professional work in the field?

The participants hope that they are:

- Leaving a legacy of work that will build the field and lay the foundation for the future. They developed businesses, theories, published position papers, curriculum and books, started programs (Head Start, Accreditation, Licensing, CCR&R's, Council for Professional Recognition, CDA) and hope that it continues to grow so they are comfortable transitioning to other meaningful volunteer work with younger leaders taking up the mantle.
- Sharing a history that has derived from their years of passion, philosophical and cultural roots of patience and persistence that can be a building block for future generations.
- Mentoring others and seeing leadership characteristics in new professionals and supporting their professional growth. Acknowledging the balance between knowing when to step in and when to get out of the way and let others lead. Being flexible enough to allow for different approaches.

Recommendations

Conceptual Framework of the Adaptive Leadership Model

By examining the career paths of the participants from a historical perspective, it becomes evident that it is necessary to honor and respect the diverse voices that have enabled the gifts and nurtured the talents within the participants and their peer groups as these gifts and talents have been used to work through the challenges that have faced the ECE field. The collective voice is important and powerful in the adaptive leadership process. In an interview with Joseph Rost, he stated “collaborative leadership is the wave of the future” (Volckmann, 2005) and as Goffin and Washington (2007) continue to cry out to the ECE field, now is the time to seize the moment to make adaptive changes to the system that will allow those individuals within the field to utilize their individual leadership styles to develop the professionalism of the field.

In the past decade, research on early childhood educational pedagogy has lagged behind practice. The Baby Boomer Generation participants spent their careers explaining what and why they did what they did for children. They built theory around practice and businesses to support their work. They trained others on how to do the work well and, ultimately, found the money necessary to develop the field’s infrastructure.

Seize the moment. The public understands the importance of the early years. As such, early childhood policy is full of diverse voices representing those individuals with financial investments in the field. Change is inevitable and welcomed. Now is the time for the ECE field to stand up and be recognized for the valuable work being done with our nation’s youngest citizens, but it also requires the field to provide the highest quality care and education that the public is expecting with increased financial investments. It is

time to universally raise the quality of childcare, especially for children ages zero to three.

Raise professional standards and support higher wages for workers. The NAEYC must see its purpose as supporting the people doing the work of the field and not just supporting children. It is important to understand generational differences within the field and acknowledge that new professionals don't want to do the caregiving work without compensation or recognition. There is no glory in wiping noses. Like the participants, today's young professionals entering the ECE field must recognize the importance of doing the time in caregiving and teaching jobs. It is critical for young professionals to partake in action research and provide an authentic voice around the table of early learning policy development. The young professionals need to realize that you must garner experience before being recognized as an expert.

Higher education institutions must be willing to increase standards of professional preparation for teacher training programs. Curriculum cannot be watered down to make a program marketable in an effort to compete for a wider audience of incoming students. The participants shared that universities and college professors played important roles as mentors who saw something special in and challenged them to seek leadership roles. Taking the time to become a reflective practitioner, one who engages in action research, will move pre-service teachers and caregivers away from curriculum focused on skills-based method courses and encourage critical thinking and support socio-emotional development. Leadership projects focused on advocacy, research and pedagogy should be encouraged and students must learn to work collaboratively in face-to-face environments, developing peer networks. Social media is a form of communication, but cannot replace

deep conversations with peers who have walked similar paths and who can give a hug when a pre-service teacher feels discouraged and is considering leaving the field before seeing the rewards of a career teaching young children. This is the support that only a mentor can provide.

Mentoring is the responsibility of the Baby Boomer Generation. Baby Boomers must actively seek to mentors others and spend the time necessary to grow new leaders. Creating a senior volunteer core of mentors willing to share expertise without judgment was a suggestion by one of the participants. This method would be a way to invest in the next generation of leaders. This investment by the Baby Boomer Generation would also create transition jobs for those individuals retiring from the ECE field, but who are not quite ready to let go of their passion for the work. These more experienced ECE professionals must be ready to share the history of their lessons learned and appreciate the boundless ideas that can be shared in a relationship with a younger peer.

Develop leadership opportunities for Baby Boomer Generation professionals. It might seem odd to support those individuals who are transitioning out of the field, but their lessons learned need to be shared in meaningful ways. This generation of passionate professionals can share the gift of tenacity that is often lacking in younger teachers raised in an era of quick responses found on the internet. The Baby Boomer Generation knows how to listen and has the time to meet new professionals in the local area - growing the field organically from the roots up. All generations must be willing to try a different approach in regard to collaboration aimed at learning from one another. These retiring ECE professionals would enjoy the opportunities to serve the field in new ways, possibly

offering to become an army of substitute teachers or hosting a group of young professionals for lunch are simple ways to support local efforts to grow the ECE field.

Eliminate the divide between childcare, Head Start and Pre-K programs. It is now time for the field to unite under the common umbrella of early care and education. All experiences children have are learning experiences. Good, bad or boring, they all matter and must be treated as critical to child development. The chasm between our silo'd programs must be eliminated. The public doesn't see the difference between childcare, Pre-K, and Head Start, only the profession itself.

Future research. Replicating this study with different generations, such as Gen Xers or Millennials, would provide insight into the field of ECE and other caring professions and garner insights about the attitudes, values and beliefs of these important generations.

It is time for the NAEYC - to herd the field toward a common goal. The NAEYC must garner the collective voice of the profession as the "gorilla" once more instead being one small voice at a table with many other players. Bringing communities of practice under one big tent and sharing the legacy of a rich early childhood history, born of the Civil Rights era where change happened, passion was ignited and persistence was born of hard earned glory, is in the best interest of the entire ECE field.

Staying relevant and responding to the changing needs of the ECE profession requires research about the developing child, teaching practices that provoke meaningful and culturally relevant curriculum, and finding the resources necessary to grow the childcare industry. Sharing lessons learned from the past, can serve as grounding point that unites generations in relationship, giving confidence to the Boomer Generation who willingly might hand over the torch of leadership.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Informed Consent Document

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE: Handing Over the Torch: Transitions of Leadership among the Baby
 boom generation in ECE

PROJECT DIRECTOR: Barb Arnold-Tengesdal, M.Ed.

PHONE # 701-214-7878

DEPARTMENT: Teaching and Learning

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH

A person who is to participate in the research must give his or her Informed Consent to such participation. This consent must be based on an understanding of the nature and risks of the research. This document provides information that is important for this understanding. Research projects include only participants who choose to take part. Please take your time in making your decision as to whether to participate. If you have questions at any time, please ask.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

You are invited to participate in a research study as **one of eight individuals who have historically led the ECE field in a visionary way** and are members of the baby boomer generation peer group (those born between 1946-1964) or on the cusp (those born between 1940-1946) still actively working in the field. You have been selected because of your exemplary work in the ECE field in research, guiding the practices and pedagogy of professionals toward excellence and high standards, and because you have been instrumental in moving public policies forward in dramatic ways.

This research study will examine the career paths of eight exemplary ECE professionals who have made significant contributions to the field throughout the past 42 years (1972-2014) in the areas of research, practice and policy development. Through interviews and your personal reflections on your career development pathway, the study seeks to ascertain how your leadership attributes were developed over time and whether any commonalities can be applied among the participants to the contemporary ECE field.

WHAT WILL MY PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be interviewed by phone or in person about your early career path, historical experiences and vision of leadership necessary to sustain the ECE field. There will be two interviews, which typically last approximately one hour each.

You will be asked if digital voice recordings can be made of your interviews. These recordings will only be used to make transcripts of the interviews. The digital recordings will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office for three years after the analysis is complete and subsequent articles can be published. Being recorded is voluntary. You may still participate without being recorded.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THIS STUDY?

Your participation in the study will last through May 2014. You will need to be available for two interviews scheduled at least two days apart at a time that is convenient for you. Each interview will take about one hour.

WILL MY CONFIDENTIALITY BE PROTECTED?

Information learned from this study will be used in scientific journal articles, in presentations and to train teachers and other professionals. Due to of your national prominence and the recognition given to the body of work you have developed, it will be hard to maintain anonymity. Though I will take many steps to ensure confidentiality, it is mostly likely that the identity of the participants will become known. If you choose to answer a question, but ask for the data from that question to not be included, which could include names of friends or relatives, your wishes will be honored. The data will only be used for contextual purposes.

Any information obtained in this study and that can be used to identify you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. You should know, however, that there are some circumstances in which the researcher may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require the researcher to show your information to a court or tell authorities if we believe that you have abused a child or pose a danger to yourself or others. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of keeping all digital recordings in a locked cabinet for three years prior to its disposal. You will have the right to review the recordings. The Project Director, along with a paid transcriptionist and NVivo programmer, will sign a confidentiality agreement.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS?

You have been selected and not arbitrarily chosen to participate, so the risks involved in this study include the loss of anonymity, but not the loss of confidentiality. You may choose not to answer any question and still continue in the study. One drawback might

be the amount of time spent in the interviews or answering questionnaires when a voice interview is not possible.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS?

No direct benefit is guaranteed to you from participating in this study. However, your participation in this research may result in the ECE field benefiting from your learned experiences. By examining the career path that you, and the other participants, have taken, this study will seek to understand what key experiences and support you utilized throughout your professional career. Then, the researcher will share with others the lessons learned about supporting young professionals in their leadership development.

WILL I BE PAID FOR MY PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY?

No participants will receive monetary compensation for taking part in the study.

IF I DECIDE TO START THE STUDY, CAN I CHANGE MY MIND?

Your decision to participate in this research is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you do decide to take part, you may change your mind at any time without penalty or the loss of any benefits that you had before the study.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about this research in the future, please contact the researcher, Barb Tengesdal, at (701) 214-7878 or by e-mail at Barbtengesdal@me.com. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if you have any concerns or complaints about the research, you may contact the University of North Dakota Institutional review Board at (701) 777-4279. Please call this number if you cannot reach the researcher, or if you wish to talk with someone else.

AUTHORIZATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

I have read the information in this consent form, have had my questions answered and voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have received a copy of this consent form. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board at (701) 777-4279.

- You may also call this number about any problems, complaints or concerns you have about this research study; if you cannot reach the research staff; or you wish to talk with someone who is independent of the research team.
- General information about being a research subject can be found by clicking “Information for Research Participants” on:
<http://und.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/research-participants.cfm>

I give consent to be audiotaped during this study.

Please initial: ☐ Yes ☐ No

I give consent for my quotes to be used in the research; however I will not be identified.

Please initial: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Subjects Name: _____

Signature of Subject

Date

I have discussed the above points with the subject or, where appropriate, with the subject's legally authorized representative.

Signature of Person Who Obtained Consent

Date

Appendix B

Confidentiality Agreement

Project Title: Handing Over the Torch: Transition of Leadership among the Baby boom generation in ECE

Investigator: Barb Tengesdal, M.Ed.

All transcriptions, documents and other work products, including the contents of said documents and work products, assigned by the investigator to transcriptionists or programmers shall be held in the strictest of confidence. Unless ordered to do so by a court order or disclosure is permitted by investigator, the transcriptionist or programmer is strictly prohibited from disclosing, revealing, copying for distribution or providing any documents or other work products to any individual and entity. This obligation shall extend past the termination of this agreement until such time as the material in question no longer constitutes confidential information by definition of law.

Name (please print)

Signature

Date

Investigator Signature

Appendix C

Interview Protocol/Guide

Interview One

Narrative description depicting life stories of study subjects, all baby boomer generation ECE leaders. This first interview will describe events, people and places that influenced their career path and supported their significant work in the field.

1. What events, people and issues influenced your career path and shaped the significant work you have done in the ECE field?
2. How has the ECE field as a whole, changed throughout your career?
3. Reflecting on your own leadership contributions, what do you believe has made the most impact on the ECE field in terms of research, practice and policy?
4. What has kept you engaged in the ECE field all these years?
5. When would you feel it is the right time to transition out of the field?

Interview two (Current views of leadership in the ECE field and ways to support contemporary generations through career development)

6. How would you define leadership in the ECE field?
7. What would you say are key points that helped you develop as a leader?
8. What was your motivation for taking on leadership roles?
9. What do you believe the upcoming generation of ECE professionals can learn from the baby boomer generation of leaders?
10. What qualities do you believe the next generation of ECE professionals will need in order to lead the field into the future?
11. How best would you advise a new professional to plan a career path in leadership?
12. If you could predict where the ECE field is heading based on your years of experience, what do you think might be in store for the field?

13. What excites you and in contrast concerns you about the future of the ECE field?
14. What opportunities do you believe must be developed to support the next generation of leaders?
15. What do professional organizational structures such as NAEYC need to do to stay relevant in this changing world?

Appendix D

Interview Note taking Guide with prompts

Interview Questions

Interview One (life history):

Narrative description depicting life stories of study participants, all boomer generation ECE leaders. This first interview will describe events, people and places that influenced their career path and supported their significant work in the field.

1. What events, people and issues influenced your career path and shaped the significant work you have done in the field of Early Childhood Education?

Prompts:

State your name and year you were born. For the record this is Participant #_____.

It is a great honor to have the opportunity to interview you. Your body of professional work has profound impact on the Early Childhood field and I hope to capture how your career path developed and what were the influences on you that has nurtured your leadership of the field.

Let's start with the early beginnings of your work as a student/ new teacher or your first involvements in the ECE field.

2. How has the field of Early Childhood Education as a whole, changed throughout your career? From your personal and professional perspective which can include historical events that were turning points for the field ECE and your career?
3. Reflecting on your own leadership contributions, what do you believe has made the most impact on the field of Early Childhood Education in terms of research, practice and policy? Describe your own leadership development. What of your work in your opinion has made the biggest impact on the field?

4. What has kept you engaged in the field of ECE all these years? **How has your interest in the field been maintained? When we hear about turnover rates near 35% in the field- what kept you focused for these many years?**
5. When would you feel it is the right time to transition out of the field? **As a boomer, there is so much talk about the void in the field of leaders and young professionals stepping up to the plate to move the profession forward- and we will go into this discussion next time, but personally- do you have plans to transition out of the field at some point?**

What would that look like or what has stopped you?

Interview two (Current views of leadership in the field of ECE and ways to support contemporary generations through career development)

For the record this is Participant #_____ and the second of two interviews.

6. How would you define leadership in the field of ECE?
7. What would you say key points are that helped you develop as a leader?
8. What was your motivation for taking on leadership roles?
9. What do you believe the upcoming generation of ECE professionals can learn from the boomer generation of leaders?
10. What qualities do you believe the next generation of ECE professionals will need in order to lead the field into the future?

11. How best would you advise a new professional to plan a career path in leadership?
12. If you could predict where the ECE field is heading based on your years of experience, what do you think might be in store for the field?
13. What excites you and in contrast concerns you about the future of the ECE field?
14. What opportunities do you believe must be developed to support the next generation of leaders?
15. What do professional organizational structures such as NAEYC need to do to stay relevant in this changing world?

Appendix E

List of Codes related to Themes

List of Codes used for Descriptive Data and Themes

Codes			
Descriptive Data	M=male F=female C=children CS=children/step GC=grandchildren N=no children YB=year born	WC=west coast EC=east coast MW=midwest S= south DC=washington DC T=teacher R=researcher B=business owner	<u>Colleges:</u> CB-Bank Street Coll. CPO=Pacific Oaks Col. CW=Wheelock College CE=Erickson Inst. CM=Univ. of Maryland CF=Univ. of Florida CS=Syracuse Univ.
Historical context, figures and places	<u>Historical period</u> RM-civil rights movement WM=women's movement VW=Vietnam war WOP= war on poverty HS=Head Start CCDF= child care development fund ABC=Act for better childcare <u>Years listed by date:</u> 61=1961 75= 1975 etc.	<u>People:</u> LK=Lillian Katz BB=Barbara Bowman BJ=Betty Jones GM=Gwen Moore JL=Joan Lombardi JD=JD Andrews MS=Marilyn Smith HT=Helen Taylor SM=Sam Miesel IG= Ira Gordan	<u>Feeling Codes:</u> P=passion PS=persistence MD=mission driven F=fear E=exciting UJ=unjustly accused Ego=ego W=worry Valid=validated B=beliefs V=value A=anxious J=judging or showing bias T=tension between parties C=committed Power=powerful Inf=influential T=tired Conc=concerned
Career challenges, choice and chance	<u>Young-listed age</u> 22=22 years of age 56=56 years of age	<u>Job:</u> T=teacher of children PE=parent educator	Auth=given authority SJ=social justice Interv=given job without interview Glint= glint in eye

		R=researcher CC=childcare D=director of program B=business start- up EC=education coordinator CT=college teacher CS=consultant	Door=new opportunity, door opened
Theory Builder	Int=intuitive knowing Inv=Inventing idea that became a theory	Cons=consensus	BV=business venture PD= policy development RI=research idea
Doing Time	T=teacher Ty=teacher plus number of years ex. (T9= teaching 9 years on job) Wy=work plus number of years ex.(W6=work 6 years on job)	Feeling codes used from Historical context	Ex= experience Lrng=learning
Leadership: Characteristics and roles	<u>L=Characteristics:</u> LRT=risk taker LPS=persistent LP=passionate LD=dedicated LC=called LFL=flexible LMD=mission driven	<u>L=Roles:</u> LN=networking LE=empowering others LB=building (ECE, Policy, Organizations) LF=followers	IT=Infants and toddlers PS= ages 3-6 preschoolers K= kindergarten ages 5-6 K3=ages 6-8 early primary CCR&R=child care resource and referral jobs SPE=special education Affiliate=NAEYC affiliate Reg=regulatory
Leadership: Burnout and renewal	BO=burnout Tran=transition Ren=renewal	Feeling codes used from historical context	
Leadership: Power and Influence	Promo=promotion Pow=power Drop=dropping	Feeling codes used from historical context	

	names (presidents, people in field or others participants in the study)		
Mentoring: Being a mentor or being mentored by others	Ment=Mentoring others Bment=being mentored	<u>Generations:</u> Silent=silent gen Boomer=boomers GenX=genXer's Mil=millennials	Mpromo=being promoted because of a mentor Minf=given influence because of a mentor Mrecog=recognized by others
Retirement and transitions	Ret=retirement Trans=transition to something else Retplace=going to a retirement place or location	Slowd=slow down Travel=travel Fam=family Noplan=no plans for retirement	Health= Health issues
Field of ECE: Characteristics	Women=women dominated field	Build=building field – infrastructure	Grow=size, scope, membership Adv=advocacy
Straddling the tension	Pol=political 4K= pre-Kindergarten CC=child care	Fund=funding issue	Wages= wages of field Stand=standards/or assessment Qual=quality issue
NAEYC	GovB=governing board	Mem=members	Caucus=caucus- rebel
Advocacy and policy	Inside=inside the ECE field Outside=outside the ECE field	Leg=legislation Lobby=lobbying for a bill or cause	Belt=beltway of DC Phone=phone tree Policy=policy development
Publishing and training	Film=filmstrips Video=video or TV	Book=authored book Trng=training	Demonst=demonstration lab, classroom or program Publish=published Reflect=reflection
Future of the field	Lead=leaders	Feeling codes used Diverse=diversity of ECE field	Collab=collaboration Legacy= sharing history or legacy of work accomplished

Appendix F

Definitions and Examples of Themes

Themes Related to Leaders in ECE

Theme	Definition	Example
Historical context, figures and places	Describes the field when boomers first entered (\approx 1960s – 1970s). Notes ways in which boomers helped shape the field; the birth of the profession; feelings toward this time period; sense of crusade and concern for others (especially those living in historically marginalized communities); and the importance that today's students knowing this history. Highlights people (e.g. Lillian Katz), places (e.g. Bank St) and historical markers (head start) that greatly influenced the field.	“So, I went from--and this was 1969, okay, so this was right at the time-- and this, I think, is critical in the lives and careers of people who are my age or who came into the field at this point. Head Start was 3 years old.”
Career challenges, choice and chance	Speaks to the challenges that boomers encountered in the field and how challenges became opportunities. Describes characteristics of respondents when entering the field – often at a young age – who were given authority and succeeded.	“And I just kind of stumbled into these things. I was just in the right place at the right time... The second year they made me coordinator of the children's school, so I had a little administrative experience under my belt, but I had just 2 years out of college...I had this master's degree and experience teaching college level, doing teacher preparation, and teaching Head Start as well. Then, so I thought I knew everything.”
Theory builders	Describes ways that boomers identified needs and problems in the field and created solutions: “intuitive knowing”.	“I felt inside myself that this is what children needed in order to prosper. And what was happening was that the research was starting to bear me out. We tried things in practical ways, but there was always kind of this valuing of the internal goodness of the child and the internal motivation, that we didn't know the specific thing that that child needed. We needed to find out from them.”

Doing the time	Discusses the importance and value of time spent as a classroom teacher as a foundation for a career in the field. Describes judgment around whether or not time was spent in the classroom. Also speaks to the importance of experiential learning for new teachers.	“I talk about how people need prior professional preparation because trying to learn with children, it's not a good thing to learn on children... I taught for 8 years, but I also at the same time when I was teaching, I got my master's degree.”
Leadership: Characteristics and roles	Illustrates characteristics of successful leaders, e.g. passionate, dedicated, persistent, risk takes – thinking in different ways, influential, flexible, voice of the field. Being “called into the field”. Seen as mission-drive work. Also details critical roles of leaders such as relationship building, networking, empowering others, and supporting others growth. Speaks to picking roles where leaders can thrive.	“What makes us good leaders, is being able to connect to people and to know what it is that they're struggling with each day and what motivates them to go and continue their work.”
Leadership: Burnout and renewal	Describes times when leaders burnt out after large projects but came back to the field.	“So, in 2004 I left the council, retired, because my first granddaughter was born...I wanted to go to Florida and be super grandmother. So, I was out of formal work in the field for 1 year...[Then] I sort of started to ease back into a little bit of consulting.”
Leadership: Power and influence	Speaks to the idea that you are not a leader if no one is following you. Stresses the importance of power and influence in the field and who gives you that power. Highlights intentional promotion into specific academic peer groups of fellow innovators and authors. Member checking within peer groups describes who was in the groups and participation was ego building.	“The idea of having an impact on large numbers of programs and children, making a difference is really what I think early childhood is all about. I think that was a way that I had the opportunity to make a huge difference. It was crazy to not do that, and I was good at it.”
Mentoring: Being a mentor	Describes the ways in which boomers are mentoring a future generation of leaders.	“You were now the persons sharing foundational philosophical beliefs with the field. You were the sponge early and now you were moistening the sponge for other people.”
Mentoring: Being mentored	Describes the experiences of being mentored by others. Recognition of	“She was fantastic, and she just had me hooked. Like, "Yes, this is want I

by others	gifts and promotions.	want to do. And I want to be her." It was one of those, "I want to be that person," because she was just so fantastic, and she just really understood child development... That was my role model and mentor."
Mentoring: Generational differences	Identifies traits of specific generations and workplace generalities and expectations.	"I've read about the young Millennial is that they really want the work and a job that makes a difference... They wouldn't want it just as a job because it's nice but because it's making a difference. And I think that would bring out the need to lead."
Retirement and transition	Describes plans for moving forward after retirement (if at all); future plans; degree of connectivity to the field after retirement; feelings about overall career (e.g. still have more to give, proud of accomplishments, etc.); new roles (e.g. grandparent), etc.	"I'll be 72 in a couple weeks, and I'd say for the last--I think from the time I turned 60, uh, I, I started thinking literally in terms of a succession plan. You know, mentoring, um, people to keep the work going and to take it farther than I can imagine. So, that's been a huge emphasis for the last 10 years for me. "

Themes Related to the Field of ECE

Theme	Definition	Example
ECE characteristics	Portrays important aspects/traits of the field such as: multidisciplinary, women dominated, growing momentum, growing in size and scope, dedication to social justice and advocacy, etc.	"But pretty much all of the original founders, a strong group of women, were there. And the idea was to study how children learn. And once we had studied it for a long time, then it was translate that knowledge into teaching."
Straddling the tension	Describes the conundrum of what leaders and practitioners want for the field versus what is realistic given issues of power, funding, politics, etc. Predominant issues include: wages, accreditation, turnover, standards/assessment, increasing pressures on	"[A] tension pieces themselves in trying to straddle that--teaching kind of what we think is best practice and preparing people for the real world at the same time and figuring out how to do that compromise."

NAEYC	<p>teachers, care of babies/toddlers, 4K, role of center director, etc.</p> <p>Outlines several aspects of this leading ECE professional organization, including: history, role in the field, importance of practitioner involvement, membership drop, limitations, re-envisioning, and respondents taking roles from the inside versus outside (e.g. “rebel caucus” versus president), etc.</p>	<p>“It’s the good news/bad news for NAEYC is that their real relevance is as the authority group, in other words, setting the standards, being the standard setters.”</p>
Advocacy and policy	<p>Speaks to the role of advocacy from inside/outside of the field; describes ways in which policy drives the field and the struggle for power and resources; describes the influence of presidencies, etc.</p>	<p>“I’d always grown up in Washington, so I always had this--I don’t know how to describe it--it’s sort of like policy is happening in a way that you’ve assumed. It’s not like people from the outside who think, “Oh well now I have to go work in policy.” It’s kind of like the border between it and life. It’s much more blurred...I never understood that I was doing policy work. It was just the work.”</p>
Publishing and training	<p>Outlines several forms of dissemination such as writing, conversing, filmstrips, photos used to share information, increase understanding, and train others. Also refers specifically to training future leaders.</p>	<p>“I decided to write a textbook. It was going to be my own work...So I decided that the big problem in the field is teacher preparation. We knew so much more than we’d ever known before, and we just weren’t sufficiently current. We really needed to be more evidence-based and research-based. I decided I wanted to write a book that reflected that.”</p>
Future of the field	<p>Describes expectations for future of the field; fears (e.g. loss of process versus product mentality and a new cohort of leaders focused more on self-versus collective action); and lessons for future leaders.</p>	<p>“The field is much bigger than when I came into it. So there are many more opportunities. It’s enticing in a way. I do think that they’re looking at it with a totally different language than we did, for 2 reasons. One is that the jobs that we are in are now opening up because so many of us are retiring. That level of jobs is opening up. Then there’s a whole bunch of jobs that just didn’t exist.”</p>

NVivo10 Screenshot of Tree Nodes

Nodes

	Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By	
[-]	Leaders in ECE	0	0	4/6/2014 9:49 AM	RP	4/6/2014 10:16 AM	RP	
	Career Challenges,	8	114	4/6/2014 9:50 AM	RP	4/21/2014 10:40 AM	BAT	
	Doing Time	8	42	4/6/2014 9:51 AM	RP	4/21/2014 11:02 AM	BAT	
	Historical Context,	8	99	4/6/2014 9:49 AM	RP	4/21/2014 11:30 AM	BAT	
	Leadership	5	10	4/6/2014 9:52 AM	RP	4/21/2014 11:35 AM	BAT	
	Burnout&Renw	5	13	4/6/2014 9:57 AM	RP	4/21/2014 10:01 AM	BAT	
	Characteristics	8	68	4/6/2014 9:52 AM	RP	4/21/2014 11:32 AM	BAT	
	Power, influenc	8	100	4/7/2014 2:25 PM	BAT	4/21/2014 11:35 AM	BAT	
	Roles	8	23	4/6/2014 9:52 AM	RP	4/21/2014 11:36 AM	BAT	
[-]	Mentoring	0	0	4/6/2014 9:59 AM	RP	4/6/2014 9:59 AM	RP	
	Being a Mentor	8	40	4/6/2014 10:00 AM	RP	4/21/2014 11:20 AM	BAT	
	Being Mentore	7	22	4/6/2014 10:00 AM	RP	4/21/2014 11:40 AM	BAT	
	Generational di	8	58	4/12/2014 10:38 AM	BAT	4/24/2014 6:30 PM	BAT	
	Retirement & Trans	8	65	4/6/2014 10:00 AM	RP	4/21/2014 11:41 AM	BAT	
	Theory Builders	8	53	4/6/2014 9:51 AM	RP	4/21/2014 11:08 AM	BAT	
[-]	Staying Relevant	6	13	4/6/2014 9:48 AM	RP	4/21/2014 11:26 AM	BAT	
	Adaptive Leadershi	5	11	4/12/2014 3:12 PM	BAT	4/21/2014 10:36 AM	BAT	
[-]	The Field of ECE	1	1	4/6/2014 10:03 AM	RP	4/20/2014 9:37 PM	BAT	
	Advocacy and Polic	8	47	4/6/2014 10:10 AM	RP	4/21/2014 11:19 AM	BAT	
	ECE Characteristic	8	50	4/6/2014 10:04 AM	RP	4/21/2014 11:31 AM	BAT	
	Future of Field	8	90	4/6/2014 10:10 AM	RP	4/21/2014 11:35 AM	BAT	
	NAEYC	7	46	4/6/2014 10:09 AM	RP	4/21/2014 11:35 AM	BAT	
	Publishing & Traini	8	45	4/6/2014 10:10 AM	RP	4/21/2014 10:07 AM	BAT	
	Straddling the Tens	8	97	4/6/2014 10:09 AM	RP	4/21/2014 11:35 AM	BAT	